

The Intellect

Al Quran
Surah al-An'am - Part 5

Al Hadith
Zuhd (Asceticism) and its Fruits

The Awakening
Guard Your Tongue!
(Part 1)

The Fitnah of Enchanting Words



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Dr. Shahid Noor

Co-editors

Zawjah Farid, Bint Akram

Marketing & Circulation

Nabeel Ahmad Sheikh

Design & Concept



INNOVATION

+92 316 8056 863

azhar@makinnovation.biz

Legal Advisor

Mr. Danial

Printer

wasaprinters@cyber.net.pk

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Everything these days, from the food that is consumed, to the clothes that are worn, to the places that are visited, is put up for show and display– it wriggles into profile pictures, adorns status updates, forms social media posts and then, it solicits comments, likes, adulations and dislikes. Add to this boiling broth of barefaced social upkeep and exhibition, a plethora of motivational smooth talkers and gurus, the exuberance of whose words can impress the most ardent of skeptics! They enthrall audiences with tips for success, ‘positivity’ and game-changing life advices. Our penetrating and enjoyable *Cover Story* speaks volumes on the topic and exposes the fallacy of certain very tall claims.

The piece in our *Sweet-n-Sour* section, (*The Drawing Room Diaries*), is a kaleidoscope of our society and elucidates rampant ills that characterize our social gatherings.

Action Alerts talks of the lack of *Tarbiyah* of our children vis a vis working hard, especially physically.

The writer opines that though children these days expend mental energy in time-wasting pursuits like gaming, but are ill-equipped to take up physical work when required of them. Turn to *Work for Working Right* to read more on the subject.

In *Memoirs*, Mufti Taqi Usmani دامت برکاتہم relates a childhood trip to his ancestral home in Deoband, where an inscription from his respected father (Mufti Shafi Usmai رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) read:

*Do not count on your stay in the world, take heed
Someone else used to stay in this house before you*

These simple words seem profound in the backdrop of his reason for leaving this house – partition. (Imagine having to take permission from immigrants who have now settled there, to take a tour of your own childhood home!)

Talking about his beloved father, Mufti Taqi Usmani دامت برکاتہم says:

Besides a large house, he also owned inherited agricultural lands as well as a garden which he had planted with much zeal, and mango trees of that garden were expected to bear their first fruits in the year he migrated to Pakistan.

These are the kind of sacrifices that were made by the Muslims of the subcontinent. Is there anyone to ‘take heed’?!

A Zahid (ascetic) is not a man who practices self-denial for the reason that he is not in a position to indulge in material enjoyment, but one who has full opportunity to gratify his desires and yet refuses to do so, and cares nothing for worldly gain or comfort.

This is an excerpt from our Al-Hadith section on asceticism and it reflects on the common (mis) perception of how people categorize a Zahid and expounds on the factual definition alongside.

In *Fatwa Forum*, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمته الله dispels doubts about hadith preservation in a very powerful, resounding manner and makes an irrefutable case for the infallibility of this indispensable source of Islamic law and jurisprudence and a manifest guide to a Muslim way of life. It takes on *Hadith*-deniers and rejectors head-on – a very useful read, and totally relatable in these times of strife and *fitan*.

Shaykh Abu Abd al-Rahman al Sulami رحمته الله categorizes “preferring of vile notions” as a harmful ‘infamy of the soul’ and traces back its emergence to the dearth of regular remembrance of Allah ﷻ and not tackling the issue at the onset, till it is entrenched and ingrained in one’s *Nafs* and then becomes difficult to weed out.

There’s more to internalize on the subject in *Spirituality Matters*.

*Wassalam,
Zawjah Farid*

The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani حفظه الله



(The Cattle)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَئِنْ أَنْجَانَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾

Say, "Who is the One who delivers you from the darkness of the land and the sea when you supplicate Him in humility and low tones (promising): 'If He delivers us from this, We shall truly become grateful?'"¹⁷ [63]

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

Say, "Allah delivers you from it and from every pain; Yet still you associate partners with Him" [64]

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبَسَكُمْ شِيْعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ ۗ انظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

Say, "He is fully capable that He should send a punishment from above you or from beneath your feet, or to put you in confusion through divisions, and make some of you taste troubles through some others."¹⁸ See how We bring forth explaining verses from different angles, so that they may understand. [65]

وَكَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ قُلْ لَسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿٦٦﴾

Your people have rejected it (the Qur'an) while it is the whole truth. Say, "I am not appointed as a taskmaster over you."¹⁹ [66]

كُلِّ نَبَأٍ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

For every event there is a point (of time and place) to occur, and you will soon know (it)." [67]

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ
الدِّكْرِى مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

When you see those who indulge in (blaspheming) Our verses, turn away from them until they become occupied with some other discourse. If Satan should cause you to forget (this instruction), then do not sit with the unjust people after recollection. [68]

وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَكِنْ ذِكْرِى لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

Those who fear Allah are not responsible for any (evil) act in the account of these (infields), except for advising them, so that they may be careful. [69]

وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا وَعَرَّتْهُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَذَكَّرَ بِهِ أَنْ تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ
وَإِنْ تُعَدِلْ كُلَّ عَدَلٍ لا يُؤَخِّدُ مِنْهَا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أُبْسِلُوا بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

Avoid those who have taken their faith as fun and games. The worldly life has deceived them. Preach with it (the Qur'an), lest one should be seized for what he did, in a way that he should have neither a helper besides Allah, nor an intercessor. Should he offer every (sort of) ransom, it will not be accepted from him. Those are the ones who are seized for what they themselves earned. For them there is a drink of boiling water, and a painful punishment, because they used to disbelieve. [70]

قُلْ أَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لا يَنْفَعُنَا وَلا يَضُرُّنَا وَنُرَدُّ عَلَى أَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ كَالَّذِي اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْرَانَ لَهُ
أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى الْهُدَى ائْتِنَا قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَى وَأَمْرًا لِنُسَلِّمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

Say, "Should we invoke, besides Allah, something that can neither benefit us nor harm us? Should we turn back on our heels after Allah has guided us? (If we do so, we will be) like the one whom the devils have abducted to a far off land, leaving him bewildered, even though he has friends who call him to the right path (saying), "Come to us." Say, "Allah's guidance is the guidance, and we have been ordered to submit to the Lord of the worlds, [71]

وَأَنْ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَهُوَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُخْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

And establish Salah and heed Him. He is the One before whom you are to be gathered. [72]

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۚ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ ۚ وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾

He is the One who created the heavens and the earth with purpose. On the day He says 'Be', it (the Resurrection) will come to be. His word is the truth, and His is the kingdom on the day the Horn shall be blown. He is the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen. He is the Wise, the All-Aware. [73]

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ آزرَ اتَّخِذْ أَصْنَامًا آلِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

Remember²⁰ when Ibrahim said to his father, 'Azar: "Do you take idols for gods? I see you and your people in manifest error". [74]

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

Thus We showed Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, so that he might be firm in belief [75].

Explanation

- 17) The pagans of Arabia believed in Allah, as the supreme God, but at the same time they believed in other gods as well who, according to their belief, took care of their worldly needs like wealth, children etc. Therefore, they used to pray to them when they were at home, but when they missed the way during their travels on the land or faced stormy waves during their voyage in the sea and became helpless, they used to supplicate Allah alone, and not the gods they had invented. The Holy Qur'an has reminded them of this phenomenon at several places. The present verse is one of them.
- 18) 'Put you in confusion through divisions' means creation of discord between the people of a single society, and 'make you taste troubles through others' refers to the violent conflicts between them.
- 19) It has been clarified at several places in the Holy Qur'an, including this verse, that the basic function of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is to convey the divine message. He is not sent to compel the people to accept it by force, nor is he supposed to subject the infidels to the divine punishment at his own choice, as demanded by the infidels.
- 20) The forthcoming verses refute the argument of those who contended that they had to follow their forefathers. They are told that, instead of following their ignorant fathers, they should follow the blessed chain of the Prophets ﷺ who were guided by Allah Himself. To begin with, the example of Ibrahim ﷺ is cited, because not only the Jews and Christians, but also the pagans of Arabia used to hold him in great reverence.

(To be continued In sha Allah)



Zuhd (Asceticism) and its Fruits

By Mawlana Manzoor Nomani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ



In the literal sense, zuhd means detachment from anything; however, in the Islamic sense it refers to indifference to the joys and comforts of the world and withdrawal from a life of ease and plenty for the sake of the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ has, in his word and deed, exhorted his followers to practise zuhd and pointed out numerous benefits of it in both this world and the next.

• Beloved of both Allah ﷻ and Man

(194/54) It is related by Sahl ibn S'ad that (once) a man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "O Messenger of Allah, tell me something, on doing which, I may be loved by Allah ﷻ as well as His bondsmen." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Cultivate detachment to the world and Allah ﷻ will love you, and cultivate aloofness towards what people possess, and men will begin to love you" (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah).

Commentary: Fundamentally, it is the attachment to worldly possessions which persuades a man to do things that make him unworthy of the love of Allah. The way to win the love of Allah ﷻ, therefore, lies in self-denial. When the fondness for the material world will end, the heart will open up to the Divine love and the bondsman will find it easy to submit to the will of Allah and to carry out His commands, and, thus, he will become the favourite of his Lord.

Likewise, when people will be convinced that he

is not envious of their wealth nor has he any desire for worldly goods or position, they will come to

like him as well.

A Zahid (ascetic) is not a man who practises self-denial for the reason that he is not in a position to indulge in material enjoyment, but one who has full opportunity to gratify his desires and yet refuses to do so, and cares nothing for worldly gain or comfort. It is reported by Abdullah ibn Mubarak that when someone called him a Zahid, he retorted, "Zahid was Umer ibn Aziz, who, in spite of being the Caliph of the day, shunned personal gain and worldly pleasures."

• Keeping Company with the Ascetics

(195/55) It is related by Abu Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ and Abu Khallad that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When you see a person whom Allah ﷻ has endowed with zuhd (i.e., the quality of indifference and detachment to the world and taciturnity and he keeps his tongue safe from vain and foolish talk), seek his company and associate with him because Allah has granted him wisdom" (Baihaqi).

Commentary: It means that he perceives the truth correctly and speaks only when it is proper and beneficial. His company has the touch of alchemy. About wisdom it has been said in the Quran:

He unto whom wisdom is given, he truly hath received abundant good (al-Baqarah, 269).

Dispelling Doubts About Hadith Preservation

By Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi رحمته الله

Translator's note: Following is a brief answer by Hakim al-Ummah Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (d.1942) to a question posed by someone who tried to call into question the well-established fact that the Sahabah, may Allah be pleased with them, and the generations after them accurately preserved the words of the Hadith. The person who raised this question resembles the modern-day hadith denier who fails to appreciate the extraordinary abilities of the preservers of hadith due to his lack of knowledge of the hadith sciences or unwillingness to examine the proofs. Hakim al-Ummah Mawlana Thanawi, defends hadith preservation in this piece by pointing out the fallacies in this person's argument, the premise of which is that the narrators of hadith could not possibly have memorized words so perfectly as that is not humanly possible. In his reponse, Hakim ul-Ummah Mawlana Thanawi has brought to light a unique perspective which, it is hoped, will further strengthen the seeker of knowledge's understanding of hadith preservation.

(Question)

A person asks, "What is the proof for the hadith being preserved word for word? The cause for the preservation of *wahi* (revelation) is that the Noble Messenger ﷺ used to have it put in writing [by the scribes]. In regard to the hadith, though, it is inconceivable that whatever he ﷺ said, people would [not only] listen to it but after [merely] listening to it they were able to [also] memorize everything [he said] word for word. This is [difficult to fathom] because there are many hadiths that are quite lengthy such as the hadith of Mi'raj. Similarly, there are many hadiths in the *Sihah* that are [also] quite lengthy. In regard to them it is believed that these are the exact words that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ spoke. For example, if an individual utters five to ten lines in front of a gathering and then asks [them], 'what did I just say?', no one in the gathering will be able to repeat, word for word, what he just said. Like this, whatever Allah's

Messenger ﷺ used to say, it is inconceivable that the listeners remembered those exact same words and two hundred years later when the hadiths were compiled, those same words were transmitted exactly as they were."

This person states that to claim that the words of the hadiths are precisely the same as they were [spoken by the Prophet ﷺ] is [claiming something that is] practically impossible. Please write a detailed and evidence-based answer to this — along with a response to this letter.

(Answer)

This doubt that has been raised on the subject of hadith preservation is not new. People have been raising such doubts for ages, even Sayyid Sahib (Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (d.1898) of Aligarh, India) would hold fast to raising such doubts in many discussions. However, after one thoughtfully considers [the following] few points, this doubt will absolutely vanish:

(1) The stories and incidents regarding the strength of the memories of the Sahabah and the *Tabi'un* (Followers) are related to such an extent in history that when put together they are *mutawatir al-ma'na* (mass transmitted in meaning). Thus, Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) would repeat a *qasidah* (poetry) of hundred verses exactly as it were after listening to it only once. [The incident of] Imam Bukhari traveling to a certain place where hundreds of hadiths were presented to him in a disordered fashion and his relating them [back] as they were originally presented then his correcting them [all from memory] is famously known and mentioned.

If the doubt is raised that this type of [strong] memory is against inherent nature (*khilaf-e-fitrat*) therefore these stories are false, then first of all the limits and principles of this *fitrah* (inherent nature) have never been fully determined through which it can be understood whether

something is in accordance with *fitrah* or not ...

Secondly, no proof has ever been established to substantiate [the claim] that “things which are contrary to *fitrah* are impossible” and their occurrence is [likewise] completely impossible at some other time – anyway, this excuse is merely building an unsound opinion on top of another unsound opinion.

Thirdly, the following observational proof exists for this [i.e., possessing exceptionally strong memory and it] not being contrary to *fitrah*: In recent times, there used to be a Molwi Hafiz رحمۃ اللہ علیہ – who happened to be blind – in Allahabad. Those who witnessed the incidents of his [strong] memory with their own eyes are still alive. Listening to these incidents astonishes one’s mind. How far can one go in denying this? Similar incidents are reported about Hafiz Muhammad ‘Azim Peshawari and a scholar from Rampur – who has recently passed away. This unworthy one has met those who have seen all three of these elders and has heard their incidents.

- (2) When Allah Most High decides to use someone [for His cause] in a given time period, He – through His power and wisdom – creates the physical and intellectual abilities in the people of that time accordingly [so they can shoulder this cause]. This principle is also from the principles of *fitrah*. Just look at the strange and unique things being invented in our times! Why doesn’t one ask if possessing such [a high level of] intellect is contrary to *fitrah* or is it in accordance with it? If it is contrary to it then how did such occurrences [i.e., inventions] happen [in the first place]? And if it is in accordance with it then why did such [inventions] not occur at an earlier time? If it will be said that the [human] condition grows day by day then I say: This growth should be considered present in all human conditions because the essential nature of humans does not vary in individual members [i.e., it remains the same]. Furthermore, why is this [growth in human capabilities] specified for some [i.e., the inventors] but not others [i.e., the hadith memorizers]?

The fact of the matter is that Allah Most High approves of such things to be invented in these times therefore he has bestowed such [extraordinary] abilities [upon certain people].

Similarly when Allah Most High wills for the preservation of the *Din* (religion) at a certain time for which he creates such [strong] abilities to memorize in the carriers of the *Din* then what is so astonishing and farfetched about this! Only the person who does not accept Allah Most High as All-Knowing and All-Powerful can deny this matter. Hence, it is pointless to address such a person.

- (3) Some of the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) such as ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As (may Allah be pleased with him) used to write hadiths down. The Prophet ﷺ, in fact, had hadith written down hence “write for Abu Shah” is mentioned in the hadith. The special efforts made for compilation of hadiths by ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (may Allah be pleased with him), who lived during the first century [AH], is mentioned in Abu Dawud and the scholars of hadith (*muhaddithun*) continued writing [hadiths] on their own although it began to be compiled in book format from [the time of] Imam Malik, who was born in 90AH. And for obvious reasons it is not considered harmful [for narrations] to be not written down in a time period that is so close [to the source]. In fact, this is what occurs in most cases, when the people who have seen or heard from the source are near extinction, that is usually when codification (*tadwin*) begins.
- (4) Irrespective of their strong memories, these people were supported from Allah Most High in an unseen manner. For example, the incident of Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) spreading his garment as the Prophet ﷺ recited some words into it which he then clasped to his bosom is mentioned in the hadith. The Prophet’s ﷺ teaching Sayyiduna ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) the supplication for memorizing the Qur’an and Hadith and him never forgetting the Qur’anic verses and hadiths, and the Prophet’s ﷺ giving him glad tidings of having perfection in faith because of this has been narrated.

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(PS. For detailed notes and references, please visit deoband.org)





Guard Your Tongue!

By Maulana Abdul Sattar حفظه الله

Significance of the 'Tongue'

Allah ﷻ has made up the human body with different types of organs, each one having its own importance. The eye is important in its own right;

those without sight realize its worth; the ear has its own essentiality; those deprived of the power of hearing realize its value. Similarly, the tongue (power of speech) is also a great blessing of

Allah ﷻ. The purpose of all of these blessings is that they be used in a manner and for works that please Allah ﷻ.

All parts have their own significance but two organs, the heart and the tongue, are such that if used for good, nothing can be better than them and if used for evil, nothing can be worse. A person moves into a life of purity from a wasted way of living when he employs his tongue to proclaim (the Oneness of Allah ﷻ), regardless if he has spent a hundred years in infidelity. Though only words, their worth can be ascertained by the fact that this declaration of a single line washes away sins of a hundred years.

A Hadith relates that on the Doomsday, a person would have only this deed to put forth, i.e. the proclamation of the Shahadah, and when placed in his list of deeds, it alone would suffice for his salvation. This goes on to show the value of these words.

The Ills of Misusing the Tongue

But, if, God forbid, this very tongue is used inappropriately, despite having neared paradise, a person may be thrown into the pit of hell.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

Undoubtedly a person says something that pleases Allah ﷻ (i.e. states something with his tongue that makes Allah ﷻ happy) unknowingly (i.e. doesn't realize its importance while saying it) but Allah ﷻ elevates his rank in Jannah because of it. (In contrast, at times) words that are displeasing to Allah ﷻ escape a person's tongue; he says it in carelessness and they land him in hell.

(Bukhari, Bab Hifz-Al-Lisan, Vol. 2, Pg.959)

Especially in these seditious times, when ignorance reigns and the ignorant are not ready to admit their lack of knowledge and understanding, the ill-use of this tongue can take one far away from Allah ﷻ. For elucidation, take an example: a person says to another "this thing should be done in this manner as per Shariah"; and the other replies: "Away with your Shariah!" (Nauzubillah), so the latter may have said it lightly, yet it pushes him out of Islam into

infidelity. That is why misuse of one's tongue (even if one makes light of it) can change one's fortune: from proximity to Jannah to falling into Jahannum.

Salvation lies in Silence

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

The one who remained quiet, succeeded.

(Mishkat, Bab Hifz Al-Lisan, Pg.413)

At another place the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

The one who believes in Allah ﷻ and the Hereafter, he should take care of his guest; and the one who believes in Allah ﷻ and the Hereafter should not bother his neighbor; and the one who believes in Allah ﷻ and the Hereafter should say either good things or remain quiet.

(Bukhari, Bab Man Kaana Youman Billah wal Yaum-ul-Aakhir, Vol.2, Pg. 889)

The Benefits of Keeping Quiet

A wise once said that silence has seven thousand benefits which are gathered into seven sentences of a thousand benefits each:

- Silence is worship without labor
- Silence is beauty without jewelry
- Silence is awe without sultanate
- Silence is a fort without walls
- One who adopts silence is not forced to seek forgiveness from others
- Silence is comfort for the Karaman Katibeen (the Angels noting down our deeds)
- Silence is a screen for shortcomings

(Tanbeeh-ul-Ghafilien, Bab Hifz-Al-Lisaan, Pg.122)

Hazrat Luqman Hakeem used to say that I have only regretted when I spoke, never when I remained quiet.

Tongue - Personality's Representative

A person's tongue is his representative; his words

reflect his inner being. That is why the Prophet ﷺ said:

A true Momin does not rebuke, does not curse and does not say indecent or bad things.

(Tirmidhi, Bab Ma'ja Fil-La'nah, Vol.2, Pg.18)

A Momin's personality is therefore preconditioned with purity of tongue because the tongue represents the inner being.

The Path to Salvation

Once Hazrat Uqba Bin Aamir RA came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said: O Prophet of Allah! What is the path of salvation? The Prophet ﷺ replied: For one, don't leave your house unnecessarily i.e. spend most of your time at home.

Today's unaware man roams around everywhere in search of peace and comfort yet, peace and comfort elude him. On the contrary, all he finds around him is darkness, obscurity and seditions. Even though peace and comfort come from within, as ingrained in all humans by Allah ﷻ, yet this neglectful man seeks it externally. Resultantly, the more he looks for it, the more it escapes him.

Allah ﷻ has placed peace in everyone's heart. Why? Because it is the need of all humans, be they rich or poor, villagers or city dwellers, learned or ignorant. Allah ﷻ kept peace accessible, right within a human's heart, so that he can find it with ease. But, today's man doesn't find any peace and comfort at home.

Home, the Best Place of Refuge

The best place to safeguard oneself from all kinds of evils is one's home; it's a safe haven and the best place of refuge.

Allah ﷻ says:

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا

"And Allah has made for you in your homes an abode..." (place of comfort)

(Surah An-Nahl 16: 80)

The fact is that when a person fails to acknowledge the blessings bestowed upon him by Allah ﷻ, then, at times, He takes away its benefits and the blessing remains with the person in appearance only. Along the same lines, when Allah's ﷻ disobedience is rampant at home, it only remains a house in shape and structure i.e. outward appearance, but its comfort and tranquility is taken away.

Value Blessings

Having a respectable source of income is a big blessing of Allah ﷻ but once it begins to cross over into His disobedience and breaking of His laws, then, it only outwardly appears as a blessing; its innate purpose is lost.

Similarly, when parents displease Allah ﷻ in grooming their kids, the façade of the blessing in the form of children is there, but in reality the children become a bane in their parents' life.

So what I am trying to instill is, that, the homes that were once a place of refuge for Muslims, where their faith was safe, where they safeguarded their beliefs, where they would find peace, tranquility and comfort after a hard day's work, are no longer abodes of comfort. Now, a Muslim doesn't feel like staying at home; he wants to head out in search of recreation and leisure; he runs from pillar to post to find peace and comfort and to wash away his unhappiness. When he gets back home, his sadness, unease and discomfort multiply manifold; he realizes that his effort to relax was in vain; he returns in gloom and with a heavy heart.

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The Fitnah of Enchanting Words

Abridged transcription of Dr Rasheed Arshad Sb's lecture
"Alfaz ki Jadugari ka fitna"

By Zawjah Farid

Some time ago I read an article by Saleem Ahmed Sb, columnist and adviser to Muhammad Azam Farooqui Sb of Jama'at-e-Islami. It was titled *Qaum aur Danishwar*, (The Nation and Intellectuals) and it began with a very profound statement: It is an era of tribulations emanating from the weaving of magical words.

This was written in the early 80s! Forty years on, his words couldn't have been but truer.

In earlier times, a particular segment of the society addressed the public. This included 'intellectuals' (a generic term per se) like poets, teachers, writers, columnists, journalists, politicians etc. Their voice reached out to a large audience as compared to the general public, whose words only echoed in private gatherings of friends, family and their own limited circle. Their level of perception would not allow them to rise above the mundane and their

day-to-day engagements would prevent them from even trying. In contrast, the likes of poets, writers and thinkers would have a much deeper sense of discernment and had a close relationship with braiding words.

Today, it seems as if there is a pandemic of 'intellectualism' – everyone has easy access to social media to air his voice, be it through Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter and the like. It doesn't even cost much. So, there is unbelievable noise out there: a label of discordant voices.

Saleem Ahmed Sb writes in the aforementioned article that it seems as if we are stationed in a market which has countless sellers, trying to market their products by screaming at the top of their voices; and each seller has a distinct slogan through which it tries to woo the maximum number of buyers.

Thus, it is a common observation that people post a tweet, put up a quote on Facebook, upload a video on the net and then keep revisiting it to check how many people retweeted it, how many people shared it and how many people viewed the video.

In contrast, in earlier times, people wrote articles for magazines but did not know about its viewership, (unlike web magazines of today (like *Makalma*, *Daleel*, *Danish* in Urdu) that allow a contributor to gauge how many people read and shared the article). There's so much fog.

Since Saleem Ahmed Sb was also an *adeeb* (writer), his sentences are structured beautifully. He goes on to say that it seems people are running in all directions in an effort to finalize one deal or the other but at the end of the day, their pockets as well as their minds remain empty! They don't achieve anything due to the prevailing confusion. Just like it is said about philosophy: to every theory there is an equal and opposite theory (an obvious rephrase of Newton's law). It is such a field where every word is contested. There are many who praise and follow, yet many who ridicule. How does one form the right decision in such a situation? How do we view this conjuring and weaving of words before us; what attitude do we take up in this regard?

In reality, there's another phenomenon at play here...

As a matter of fact, ideas mostly emerge in the West, and then they trickle down to us. It's an

offshoot of Capitalism. But since about a hundred years, the spearhead in the West and Europe, the vanguard, is solely the United States of America. And a near-perfect vessel for quickly accepting and integrating the ideas generated by capitalism is none other than our next-door neighbour. So, the ideas and concepts that diffuse into our country from the West, first pass through another medium: India.

Today, I hope to bring to your attention a phenomenon, which has spread like an epidemic (and its impact has been exacerbated by the peppering of religious ideals): "motivational speaking".

Around twenty-five to thirty years ago, there was an influx of "success" related literature in the form of best-selling books by Dale Carnegie and Edward De Bono, joined by business and marketing gurus, who specifically focused on selling / marketing techniques. Then, it transcended into large scale literature addressing the public at large. People were told that if they adopt the proposed tips, success would knock at their doors. Stephen Covey came up with the best-selling "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People".

This trend landed into Pakistan as well with people writing and talking about it, followed by workshops and sessions, which was then embraced by the corporate culture. We now see big companies inviting and hosting 'motivational speakers' and there is a deluge of clips being shared on WhatsApp and other social media.

India has had its own set of conjurers. In Pakistan, this concept was promoted with a religious, spiritual tinge – Maulana Rumi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, Buleh Shah and the like were quoted for the perfect recipe of *deen* plus *dunya*. Gradually, people with a religious orientation also adopted this style, with a particular body language and articulation at play. These speakers mostly converse in an easy-to-understand manner and keep the content very simple and uncomplicated.

As a disclaimer, I would like to clarify at the onset that we are in no position, nor do we have any right to comment on anyone's intention. Also, we cannot say that such sessions and literature have no efficacy at all. I am sure some people might be benefitting from these, but the overall impact is a pseudo one. The audience is mesmerized with

examples and success stories and they feel elated, on cloud nine, as if they would be able to achieve all that the speaker has accomplished. Sadly, it doesn't happen so.

The methodology adopted by these speakers is to gather material and charts from here and there and glue them together. Just like the storytellers of our villages, who would combine different tales for the purpose of entertainment alone and would retell them in a manner that would make people laugh and cry, but when they finished relating it, the audience would've gained nothing other than getting themselves entertained. This is the end result of such motivational lectures and literature as well.

Now let us see, one by one, the numerous issues with this approach.

What is magnified the most through these discourses is "success" – as if success is a deity to be worshiped. And this ethos is actually a manifestation of capitalism. In fact, not even capitalism, people in the West and Europe generally now look with disdain towards America, the real projector of the "land of dreams": whosoever steps on this land, shall attain "success". Thinking Europeans realize that with regards to these concepts, the United

personal anecdotes: "my mother said so and so, my father said so and so", though nothing of the sort may have happened! The tale would go on to enthrall the audience with incidents of despair, where the protagonist was forced to wash dishes and sleep rough... "And now you see me standing at this position".

Using the word 'success' is problematic because success can entail a lot of different things. But the meaning of success has been restricted to money and fame. These two variables are described as the epitome of success. It is true that money and fame are entrenched in human psyche – Sufi literature is rampant with references to the adversities caused by *hubb-e-jah* and *hubb-e-maal*. The Prophet ﷺ mentions that two hungry wolves do not cause as much destruction amongst a herd of cattle as much is caused in a person's Deen by the love of money and fame. So, though the love of these is intrinsic to man, yet to declare them as the ultimate measures of 'success' is the real problem.

Thus, if there's a rickshaw driver who earns a Halal living, has a roof over his head and spends a peaceful life with his wife and kids, he is not considered 'successful' on the scale described by this motivational speaker. The common man,

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So, the first problem with this approach is the fact that the ideal of "success" is marketed and sold. The speaker gives mostly examples of his own 'success' – how he went on from owning a motorcycle to a Lamborghini or BMW. He goes on to expound that "if I can achieve such heights of accomplishments, so can you". He follows this up with a tale, comprising more of fiction and less of facts but it would be recounted in such a manner so as to bring tears into your eyes. It will include

a poor or simple person, has no space on the ladder of success; even though, there are people who (may not even have a religious outlook on life per se, yet they) believe they are leading good lives, maintaining healthy relationships, despite the fact that they are neither rich nor famous. The meaning of "success" has, thus, been unjustifiably shrunk. Even if all fifty people attending the workshop attempt to follow the exact footsteps of the speaker, then too only a handful would attain the success he spells out. It is against the Divine scheme of things – everyone becoming successful through a set formula. There are a lot of differences

between individuals. Even those who do not believe in a Supreme Being acknowledge that if a person attempts to follow the exact path taken by another, still, it does not necessitate his success as well. The diversities in nature and personalities of people ensures this. Humans are not like identical items being churned out of a factory.

The second issue in these motivational talks is the inclusion of spirituality, holy scriptures and Sufi literature, so as to indicate that Allah ﷻ also wishes and endorses this.

An American sociologist, Christian Smith, did a study of teenagers in the US and said that his subjects have an operative religion in their hearts called "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism". The concept behind it is that there is a God, Who loves humans and He wishes them to remain happy and successful ("Feel good" – that humans should think

religious perspective is distorted, it also doesn't yield any worldly benefits! Religion, which has a spiritual purpose and goal, can't be customized to produce worldly gains.

Another issue is that such literature does not bring to the fore a big factor that leads to acquiring wealth and fame: fate. (You can term it 'fate', if you are a believer and if you are a non-believer, you can call it luck, contingency etc.). People who are deemed successful, if you read their best-selling biographies, you will realize that many factors, that were not in their own hands/control, came together to lead to their eventual success. You will hear statements to this effect coming from the likes of Bill Gates, or Jeff Bezos (the Executive Chairman of Amazon). The former comments that had he been born in say, Somalia, instead of the US, with this same set of skills and expertise, he could never have been as successful. This implies

At times, when one employs religion for worldly ends, in addition to the fact that it shows one's religious perspective is distorted, it also doesn't yield any worldly benefits! Religion, which has a spiritual purpose and goal, can't be customized to produce worldly gains.

well of themselves). This God doesn't intervene or interfere in the lives of humans – He is only like a problem-solver (just like one goes to a therapist in case of an emotional issue). And "Deism" included in the same name does not refer to God Who is an Omni-present, Living, Governing Being but only an enunciator of a few moral injunctions.

An indicator of this notion is the frequency with which media anchorpersons frequently use words like "be happy", "keep others happy". As though the biggest value is solely that one becomes happy – 'give yourself time', 'take care of yourself' – these are concepts that are peppered with religiosity – just like in the US, there was a time when phrases such as "The Gospel of Health and Wealth", "The Gospel of Prosperity" were in vogue – to portray that God also wishes you to have a lot of wealth and that you are in good health – 'pay attention to your body, pay attention to your pocket; focus on these things'.

At times, when one employs religion for worldly ends, in addition to the fact that it shows one's

that America offered him a comprehensive system and conditions conducive to his success.

So, there are many factors which are not in one's control, which obviously contribute to one's success. This is not mentioned at all by these motivational speakers.

Then another concept which is frequently highlighted in such literature is the claim that man has full control / power over fate. He can achieve whatever he wishes. Nothing, no barrier, can stop him. Such hubris and an arrogant approach are enough to make a dent in a person's metaphysical perspective and moral values; considering oneself an autonomous being – 'I am self-sufficient; whatever I wish, I can achieve'.

This creates a false sense of self-assurance in people. And since these speakers say things in their talks that have a religious connotation, their own quality of tawwakul (trust in Allah ﷻ) weakens; their relationship with du'a (supplication) weakens as well – in the sense that they feel 'I am self-

reliant, I have to handle my affairs myself, I have to trust and do tawakkul on my own resources'. This thinking weakens and erodes a person's moral character.

Another issue that emerges side by side is that such motivational talks and literature go on to suggest that a person is himself responsible for his poverty or affluence. There's a saying to the effect that 'if you are born poor, it isn't your fault, but if you die poor, then it definitely is your fault'. This mindset spells out poverty as a curse – as if it is a moral sin or failing. Our tradition doesn't say so. If you read *Riadh us Saliheen*, you will find chapters titled:

"فضل الفقر" و "فضل زهد في الدنيا" ("The virtue of asceticism in the world" or "The virtues of poverty")

Or if you read *Kitab ur Riq'a'ah*, "كيف كان عيش" صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم "النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم" (How the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم spent his life).

The things you observe in them, are in total contrast to these ideas.

The motivational speaker implies that if a person is poor, he himself is responsible for it! And if he is unable to earn at par with the well-to-do, it's as if there's some flaw in him – and that too a moral flaw. And because of it, he must be pitied; he should dislike himself. This leads to another problem: people are unable to empathize with the poor because they believe that the underprivileged are incapable of earning well due to personal failings.

This is one of the ethical / moral debates in the West these days because a number of countries, mostly Scandinavian, are called "welfare states".

How do they become welfare states? They contend the existence of 'Haves' and 'Have-nots', although this division can never be eradicated from the world.

A similar concept that has been in vogue is the ideal that 'equality means that everyone should be equal'. This is logistically impossible – to give everyone an equal amount of wealth. Even if it is done, people will still remain different in position, rank and status. For example, if you decide that everyone has to get Rs. 10,000 per month, some people who receive this sum would behave prudently and take care of the money to invest it

properly; they would make do with less in personal expenses. Others would be spendthrifts; they would spend off the entire sum. So, after a few months, again, classes will be established automatically. It is impossible to maintain everyone at the same level.

To counter this 'non-attainability of equality', some people put forth the concept of (at least) an 'Equality of Opportunity'. This too is impractical – you may provide the same opportunity to people, but humans are not alike. They are different with regard to capability, vitality, zeal etc. So, they will land back at square one eventually i.e. uneven social status.

That is why, now in the West there is a concept called "Negative Discrimination", as opposed to 'discrimination', where one is shown prejudice due to race, colour, religion etc. In 'Negative Discrimination', the disadvantaged are given preference and provided more opportunities. Because if a level playing field is offered to everyone, they say, then some would remain underprivileged; so, opportunities need to be made uneven, like the quota system. As an example, if we give equal opportunities to everyone then, a boy who has studied in an English-medium school in Karachi would have a competitive edge over a boy who has studied with underqualified teachers in a village school.

Again, creating this kind of a flatness is not possible.

In so-called Welfare States, the 'Haves' are taxed heavily and then the money is distributed. It is something like the Robinhood concept. But now, this too has been declared unethical and immoral, as a person might question, "Why should I bear the brunt of another's incapacity or poverty? For what reason am I being punished? I am working to earn and I have money; how can you take it from me and distribute it amongst the poor. That's not fair!"

Thus, literature that glorifies and magnifies the importance of money and fame creates disdain for the poor, where the rich think that the poor are bent upon ruining us; they are taking away our money.

Another problem in such discourses is the undue credit given to 'happiness'.

(Happiness is a spiritual emotion, and one of our

teachers mentions that being happy is a religious responsibility. A happy person is a grateful person, in the sense that he feels that 'my Lord ﷻ has showered me with blessings'. A tradition related to Ramadan says that when a Muslim opens his fast, it pleases him: he was not partaking of Allah's ﷻ blessings during the day due to His commands and now that he has been given permission, he leaps to benefit from them. Sayyidah Ayesha ﷺ was asked about two Companions ﷺ, one who hastens to open the fast as soon as it's time and one who delays opening it. She ﷺ appreciated the former and explained that this was the way of the Prophet ﷺ – an expression of one's complete dependence on Allah ﷻ. In this context, happiness is a good thing).

But the concept of 'happiness' as pleasure, this has really degraded its meaning. Bentham remarked that man has only two masters: pain and pleasure (and the word 'pleasure' is even lighter than 'happiness'), and he termed both 'hedonisms'; running after pleasures (even though pain has more depth than happiness, it can have a very deep impact on one's personality).

Anyways, giving 'happiness' importance to the level of worshipping it – this is not an attitude to be appreciated. And man has not come to this world so that he remains happy and pleased all the time. Instead, he has come here to be tested, and spend his life as a bondsman.

Too much emphasis on optimism is in itself problematic. This of course does not imply that we lose hope; but baseless wishful thinking is unproductive. One has to be realistic. Our deen encourages *husn-e-zun*, not over-expectations.

Another issue with the standard motivational talks / literature is the claim that success is attained by merely adopting a few habits. This is an oversimplistic approach as developing a few traits alone cannot bring about a miracle. This is the reason that people who attend a lot of such talks and read a lot of such literature, while they are attending the lecture, they feel rejuvenated, excited and energetic but when in real life, they do not achieve the promised results, they tend to become depressed and despondent.

Yet another sticky point is that not much importance is given to 'structure' and 'system' in this literature; instead, the 'individual' is given over-importance.

Saleem Ahmed Sb points out in another essay:

عشق کو شاد کرے غم کا مقدر بدلے

حسن کو اتنا بھی مختار نہ سمجھا جائے

Man is not indispensable; nor does he enjoy such authority...

Too much emphasis on optimism is in itself problematic. This of course does not imply that we lose hope; but baseless wishful thinking is unproductive. One has to be realistic. Our deen encourages *husn-e-zun*, not over-expectations.

Then, another subject emphasized upon in motivational talks and literature is 'positive thinking'; the concept that things start taking the shape of your thoughts – your thinking and positivity would definitely be reflected externally; if you think good, good will happen. If you think bad, bad will happen. This concept is more or less fraudulent. Things don't happen this way. If matters were so simple, then, everyone would've done so...after all, it doesn't cost much to think positively. The described results do not materialize so smoothly, if they materialize at all!

یہ میرا دل نہیں دنیا ہے میری جان اسے
تم فقط حسن سے تسخیر نہیں کر سکتے

Beauty isn't sufficient to surmount the world, a lot more is needed.

Hence, this kind of literature ignores the fact that if the system is corrupt and powerful, an individual can't do a lot. The motivational talk would make you believe that if you cannot bring about a change, you yourself are to blame. You

are not told that the system around you might have intrinsic problems and faults that may lead to your 'failure'.

Most such literature generally supports capitalism, so that the status quo is maintained. And that no one thinks about bringing change. Instead, it immerses you in thinking about yourself alone.

And after attending such talks or reading such literature, the concept one builds about the personality of a person, is a term that Erich Fromm used: "The Marketing Character" – where the real challenge a person faces is to make himself a 'sellable commodity'.

Internationally, this has been happening since quite some time. But now it is appearing in advertisements for our local educational institutions: making yourself a sellable commodity, improving your brand name, so as to result in a greater bid for you. A leftist poet says:

یہ شہر ہے کہ نمائش لگی ہوئی ہے کوئی
جو آدمی بھی ملا، بن کے اشتہار ملا

In our private institutes you now see students roaming around as 'products'. Their main job isn't just studies, but also, to attract the attention of the opposite gender. This is a disease – marketing and advertising oneself; it is 'commodification', where everyone has to have an 'exchange value'. A person's own worth counts for nothing.

نہیں اسکی پرسش الفت اللہ کتنی ہے
سب ہی یہ پوچھتے ہیں آپ کی تنخواہ کتنی ہے

In earlier times, one's worth was measured by *Ulfat ullah*; if you are an *Allah-waala*, (a man of God, a true bondsman) that determined your real worth. But now, your worth is measured by your pay scale.

The objectives for gaining an education have become insignificant. The earlier people, since the time of Aristotle, described the most superior purpose of education as *ma'arifat* (knowing / understanding); meditating on the truth (*haqeeqat*), finding the truth. At the next level, the

objective was to have a pure, respectable life. At a third level, the aim was to gain skills and learn techniques for earning a living. Now, matters have changed. Iqbal said:

وہ علم نہیں زہر ہے احرار کے حق میں
جس علم کا حاصل ہے جہاں میں دوکف جو

And

عصر حاضر ملک الموت ہے تیرا، جس نے
قبض کی روح تری دے کے تجھے فکر معاش

Thus, we should watch out for the unfettered spread of this epidemic. It's not as if such motivational material doesn't impact us – even if we listen to things merely for entertainment purposes or to pass time, even then, they influence us.

The holy Prophet ﷺ was very vigilant about people not getting diverted from their real purpose of life. Once when the Sahaba رضی اللہ عنہم were appreciating a cloth that had come from Yemen, impressed with its texture, the Prophet ﷺ immediately pointed out that Sa'ad bin Ma'az's رضی اللہ عنہ handkerchief in Jannah is much superior to this.

Thus, he directed their attention towards the real purpose of life and radically changed their perspective, so that they don't get engrossed in ephemeral materials of this world.

In conclusion, reading this kind of 'motivational' material or watching such videos create the kind of serious problems I have outlined and one must remain mindful and remember that much of it is deceptive – the purpose for which it is viewed is hardly ever attained.

The real success is of the showman who is selling this product – he is the winner; the rest are all losers.



A Trip around the World *Excerpted from the travelogues of Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb* دامت برکاتہم

Translation: Zawjah Zia

One of the most vital needs of any Muslim community is a mosque. A mosque serves as a source of providing religiously synchronized guidelines for the practical lives of its visitors, hence it proves to be a beacon emitting out the rays of religious thought to illuminate all walks of life.

As for the city of Tokyo, many small *Musallahs* (prayer areas) have been established for the local Muslims to pray, but the city doesn't have a single proper Masjid (mosque) to date. The masjid that was constructed back in 1937, the one

mentioned earlier, was there for a long time after and thousands of people entered the fold of Islam through it. Even during the Second World War, this masjid remained safe despite the fact that many buildings around it were completely destroyed due to bombardment. It was only in the recent past that the building of this masjid was destroyed because of earthquakes and floods. Now that space remains vacant. The cost of construction in Japan is so huge that the reconstruction is estimated to cost around ten million US dollars. The Islamic center here has gotten the



architectural design officially approved and it is in the process of raising the required funds for the sacred purpose. The construction is likely to begin in December this year and the center has called out to the Muslim brethren around the world to contribute for the construction of the only masjid to be in Tokyo.

The issue following closely behind this is the absence of any madrassah imparting formal education of Quran *majeed* and the religious disciplines. The Muslim immigrants here have been consistently marrying Japanese women after having them revert to Islam but there's no mentionable system in place for the religious education and grooming of these women and their children. Therefore, that is another dire need of the Japanese Muslims yet to be fulfilled.

One of the main hurdles in fulfilling this need is the lack of Islamic religious literature available in the Japanese language. The Islamic center has managed to translate and get published around forty books but that is far from enough of course.

When it comes to religion, the Japanese people are quite open-minded and inclusive. The very need hence is to convey the message to them with due effectiveness. Some miscreants around the world have tried putting a blob upon the name of Allah's ﷻ *Deen* by committing acts of terror in the name of Islam. This has given the western media a chance to spew false propaganda against

Islam and Muslims in general. The ugly fumes of this fire have somewhat touched the Japanese society too. But despite it all, I have a feeling that carrying out *Dawah* work with required wisdom and sincerity can prove to be quite fruitful in this land.

I realized that the people at the Islamic center had already been informed and were waiting for my arrival. I was welcomed with much love and respect by the center head Mr. Sualeh Samrai and the secretary Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui. I was shown around and briefed about the center's performance and some issues they had been facing.

This Islamic center has recently had an addition of a saintly elder Mawlana Naimatullah Khaleel sahib. An Uzbek by origin, he had migrated to al Hijaz during the time of the Russian oppression. He was an imam of the Masjid an-Noor of Makkah tul Mukarramah for a long time. He had visited Pakistan too a number of times. I first got to meet him in Saudi Arabia and then once in Tashkent. When Mr. Sualeh Samrai met him once, he requested him to come to Japan for *tableegh*. Mawlana Naimatullah sahib accepted his invitation and now he's been doing a wonderous job in *tableegh* here since then. Mr. Samrai told us that before Mawlana Naimatullah's arrival in Japan, whenever the Japanese people would visit us in the center asking about Islam, we'd provide them with the relevant information and they'd leave.



But Mawlana Naimatullah, ever since his arrival, had never let them leave without calling them to Islam; hence many have entered the fold of Islam through his sincere Dawah.

Mawlana Naimatullah has gotten a four-page pamphlet printed in Japanese language titled "What is Islam" and he has learnt a few sentences in the Japanese language like 'The Japanese people are amazing' 'I love Japanese people' 'Please accept this gift from my side'. Every time he meets a Japanese person and is able to engage him in conversation, he says these sentences to him and then presents him with this pamphlet of his. Then he asks him to repeat the Kalimah Tayyibah after him. After that he asks him his name, and then adds a 'Ahmad' 'Ali' or 'Umar' with it. Then he asks the Japanese person to repeat his new name and then asks him to remember it. Then finally he asks them to go through the pamphlet.

I was really amazed to hear this. I enquired if this routine really helps in any way. Mr. Samrai admitted that he too took this practice of his as a joke in the beginning. However, Mawlana sahib has a strange philosophy attached to it and there's no doubt that this has reaped mind boggling results; it would be only appropriate to have Mawlana sahib narrate the philosophy himself. Mawlana Naimatullah sahib then said, "Indeed, the kalimah tayyabah is a *noor*, and its noor affects a person's heart even if it is recited without understanding what it means. Our Prophet ﷺ would call out only this during the festival of Ukaz; "Say *La Ilaha IllAllah*, you'll succeed". So I want to have people say these words of enlightenment at least once for I am sure that it is going to benefit them sooner or later *InshaAllah*.

This philosophy is nothing but the truth. Once, Mawlana sahib used it with a professor of Tokyo University visiting him. The professor recited the kalimah and somehow his heart instantly filled with *Imaan* and he became a Muslim then and there. This miracle of the Kalimah didn't stop here. The professor went back to the university and then called Mawlana one fine day asking him to visit the University as soon as possible. The matter was that the professor had actually conveyed the message of Islam to his peers at the University and a number of them were now ready to accept

Islam. Mawlana Naimatullah sahib immediately seized the moment and reached the University where around fifteen to twenty professors were gathered in a room, waiting for him to come and help them take *Shahadah*. Now all of these new Muslims are regular visitors and beneficiaries of the Islamic center.

When I left the Islamic center, Mawlana Naimatullah accompanied me and he had a bundle of his pamphlets with him which he kept giving away to people on the way. He said some of these are sure to contact back and that would give him a chance to do his job. Amazed as I was, I really think Mawlana sahib was a customized source of the *Khair* of Islam that Allah ﷻ has blessed the Japanese people with.

After Maghrib that day, sheikh Qaiser sahib had invited over a few Pakistanis at his place to meet me. Sheikh Qaiser was also the president of Muslim League Japan wing. He first took us to visit his office which too served as a small Islamic center serving as a place where Pakistanis could interact with other local Muslims to discuss collective issues of the community and try finding solutions for them. Here too, when I found these community members gathered, I took the opportunity to urge them to pay special attention to the religious education and grooming of their community. Everyone agreed and reiterated their intention to play their part in this regard with responsibility.

Sheikh Qaiser sahib then hosted a scrumptious dinner at his *Halaal* Pakistani food restaurant nearby. The beautiful gathering was concluded late at night and I returned back to my Hotel room at around midnight, having a deep mark of gratefulness upon my heart for all the love and affection that these brethren had shown.

I flew back home the next morning. Going around the world in these past twelve days was an unforgettable experience.

All Praise and Glory belongs to Allah ﷻ .

(Concluded)



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Education 101

Women *and* Work

By Bint Akram



We live in a world of confused identities. When I say, 'confused identities', I am referring to a world where neither men, nor women seem to be very

much conscious of who they are, what have they become (and are constantly in the process of becoming), and where are they heading to. Or as

Yeats would have it, 'things fall apart; the center cannot hold'. Exhausting oneself in the rat race of accumulating more and more, it is the basics – the centre – that we seem to have become criminally negligent of.

The situation is appalling – we, who are 'educated enough' so as to be able to make sense of these lines composed in 'English', have grown up with a sense of being uprooted. Uprooted from what, one may ask, and therein lays the rub! It is our faculty of discernment that seems to have become a thing of the past - we are 'schooled' into accepting without questioning whatever values are inculcated in us by our school, college and the university. The mere thought of questioning them, it appears, escapes our programmed memories...

Being a university graduate myself, I wish to share an internal conflict that I encountered during my studies. This article, however, is far from being an account of my personal odyssey. Yet, I am confident enough that the questions I am about to raise here arise in the minds of all those young Muslim women who at some point in time begin to question their educational enterprise.

Trained under the Western system of educational values, there might come a time in a Muslimah's life when she starts feeling her aspirations to be in contradiction with what her *deen* demands of her. A process of 'questioning-oneself' might follow and during this phase, one may also experience a deep sense of meaninglessness as to the supposed futility of one's educational endeavours. Before writing further about how such a situation could be dealt with, I want to narrate the story of how our perceptions about education are shaped by our elders – parents, teachers, relatives, older siblings – in these times.

As children, we are always asked this extremely worn-out question by almost every person we encounter in our daily lives: what would we like to become when we grow up! In response, if a child looks confusingly at his interlocutor, he is also given his options – teacher, doctor, engineer, pilot and the clichéd list would go on. Parenthetically we must also note here that the modern day parents tell their young ones that they need not limit themselves to these clichéd options but 'explore'

other fields of study too! And there you have a burgeoning interest of our youth in disciplines like visual studies, media, journalism, business studies, you name it.

Now, of course there is nothing wrong, you might say, with being 'interested' in any field of study. Indeed, there isn't. What, however, goes amiss in guiding the educational course of a child in such a manner is that the intellectual horizon of our children gets circumscribed by our worldly dreams and desires. As a result, the subsequent formative years of their lives are spent acquiring education in schools and colleges in the hope of making their parents' 'dreams' come true. Gone are the days when our elders used to talk about the 'higher' things in life during our childhood – our identity as a Muslim, the preparation for death, the life hereafter, the meeting with our Lord, and so forth.

Coming back to the dilemma a young 'educated' Muslim woman faces when she becomes cognizant and conscientious of the responsibilities that her *deen* demands she should shoulder, her first reaction is that of utter bewilderment. Perturbing questions and ideas – 'what is the purpose of acquiring all this education if I am unable to work?', 'I will forget everything I have learnt all these years if I sit at home idly', 'what is the use of pursuing a professional degree if I am unable to earn?' – follow, engendering in one a sense of directionlessness.

As mentioned at the outset, we live in a world of confused identities. The moment we collide head-on with our real identity, the reaction has to be that of befuddlement. The questions stated above are also the result of a similar confusion. Our purpose of life is not to tire ourselves out in acquiring the benefits of this world, and unfortunately this is exactly what our educational system has prepared us for! So, where to go henceforth?

First Things First

Amidst this intellectual confusion, a woman must first thank God for having restored to her, her faculty of discernment. Is it not a moment to rejoice that she is one of those few lucky women who eventually question their present life and are able to cast a critical look at the system of values

their education has handed down to them? This sense of thankfulness is surely the first step towards intellectual clarity in life.

Critique thyself!

Next, one must think as to what exactly one had been acquiring the education for? We have to be scathingly critical of ourselves at this point. There is a need for honestly analysing one's motives and intentions for studying the discipline they have chosen for themselves. Was it its commercial appeal that propelled us to take it up? If yes, then we need to rectify our intentions. We need to rid ourselves of the idea that it is our education that is going to help us earn rizq! Sustenance is the responsibility of Allah ﷻ and we must bear that in mind. Moreover, ideally speaking, life is not about acquiring as many luxuries as possible. Unfortunately, when we talk about the 'commercial' appeal of a discipline, it is the material luxuries, and not the fulfillment of our basic needs, that we have in mind as a goal.

Work = Money?

One of the most distressing thoughts that most of us women have to deal with is that of not being able to work! After one has analysed one's motives for educating oneself, it becomes all the more necessary to probe the idea of work itself. In the present-day capitalist societies, work is only that which earns you monetary rewards. The status of a 'housewife' is surely not as respectable as that of a professional working in a multinational. This is so because house chores cannot be characterised as 'work', as a mother of three kids staying at home would not be paid for being a mother! It is required that women break free of this capitalist notion and stop looking down on herself if her circumstances do not allow her to work after having earned a professional degree. Further, even those of us whose circumstances do allow them to work should deeply think about their priorities in life, a subject we shall now turn to.

Prioritise Your Life

Those of us who are privileged enough to make a choice between whether to work or not should consider it a luxury for us. We ought to think deeply about our lives, our responsibilities and then make a choice. Be honest to yourself and think if you really need to 'work' and earn more. Consider living within your means. Prioritising becomes all

the more important once you start a family of your own. If you prioritise being a home-maker, there is nothing better than that. Be confident about it and stop thinking you are "wasting" yourself! It is, after all, no belittling task to take charge of an entire family. Life is, after all, a career in itself and you are required to be competent enough when it comes to practicing life skills!

Contribute...

Consider your education as a useful tool that would help you contribute to your personal life. Discover the innumerable ways in which one can make use of their education. Always spare time to read about the subject you had studied so hard at one point in time, and stay abreast with the latest developments in your field. In this way you would not feel you have 'lost touch' with your studies. If you have a knack for writing, contribute your writings to various online and print publications. Befriend books and help those around you befriend them too. Reading is probably the only activity that gives one a strange sense of intellectual fulfillment. Develop a taste for reading quality stuff though. Take charge of your family life; monitor your family's habits. For example, learn to be positively critical of habits like mindless watching of the television, and back your arguments against such activities with intellectual support from books and sources dealing with the subject.

Identify Yourself

Throughout the course of this article, I have twice stated that we have confused identities. There is one identity as that of a particular kind of woman – a hard-working, professional – which our educational institutes give us. There is another identity – apparently in conflict – that is given to us by our religion, which requires us to prioritise our personal lives over the professional ones. Discover the latter by attending the company of those who have already identified themselves – the pious of this ummah. Approach them with your queries about life and seek guidance in accordance with the *deen*. They always help you find ways out when it seems you are in a cul-de-sac.

Read extensively and intensively about Islam in general and the role it assigns to women in particular. Explore the phenomenal lives of the mothers of the faithful and the other pious women of the ummah, and discover how gracefully they served the religion through their knowledge.

An extremely positive outcome of this could be that our deep-seated ideas about knowledge and success might change altogether. We can then begin inquiring into other holistic learning methodologies rooted deeply in tradition. It is also very much possible that we opt for a completely different set of educational values for our children to spare them the pangs of feeling spiritually uprooted! Imagine the breadth of one's intellectual horizon when they are able to not only counterpose, but also make a choice between more than one systems of education, originating in different – at times even opposite – epistemologies!

Our system of education has not only conditioned but anesthetised us to the extent that we fail to identify any loopholes in it, let alone expose and mend them. Our schools help us gauge the levels of success in material terms. Knowledge is what gets us a lucrative job and not something in which spiritual solace is to be sought. Such are the notions that our education indoctrinates us with. It is time we begin questioning these ideas. It is time we start comparing the images of an ideal woman – the one that is created on the canvas of religion, and has its roots in revelation, and the other, which our schools have painted for us!

The Parting Advices of Hadhrat Uthmaan رضي الله عنه

Hadhrat Alaa bin Fadhl narrated from his mother that after Hadhrat Uthmaan رضي الله عنه was martyred, the people searched for his wealth and found a locked box. When they opened the box, they found in it a paper on which the following was written:

“This is the parting advice of Uthmaan. I begin with the name of Allah, the Most Kind the Most Merciful. Uthmaan bin Affaan testifies that there is none worthy of worship but the One Allah who has no partner and that Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم was Allah’s servant and messenger. He also testifies that Jannah is real, Jahannam is real and that Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم shall resurrect those in the graves on a day about which there is no doubt. Indeed, Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم never breaks a promise. Upon this did he live, upon this did he die and with this will he be resurrected, InshaAllah.”

A narration of Nizaamul Mulk states that the following couplets were written on the reverse side of this paper (which mean):

“Independence makes one so content that his status soars. Even though it suppresses him to the extent that poverty threatens

Though you should be patient when it strikes, remember that difficulty

Never comes without ease following on its heels

Whoever does not compare times cannot understand grief

Whoever does not compare times cannot understand grief

The promises of time are to be found in the changing of the days”

(Excerpted from 100 Stories of Hazrat Uthman رضي الله عنه, published by Zam Zam Publishers)



Preferring Vile Notions

Shaykh Abu Abd al-Rahman al Sulami رحمته الله

Among the infamies of the soul is that it prefers vile, evil notions that order it to perform violations. This is from one's lack of vigilance and lack of consistency in their remembrance of Allah.

This condition is treated by resisting evil notions from the start so that they don't become ingrained.

This is [achieved] by continual remembrance [of Allah], adhering to fear [of him], and by knowing that Allah is aware of what is in your heart - just as created beings know what you make public.

Hence you become shy from mending for creatures the place they view while you have not rectified the place the Real [Allah] views. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم said: "Allah does not look to your forms nor to your actions; rather, He looks to your hearts."

I heard Abu Bakr al-Razi say: I heard Abu al-Hasan al-Alawi, the companion Ibrahim al-Khawwas, say:

I heard Ibrahim al-Khawwas (may Allah grant him His mercy) say:

The beginning of sin is the evil notion. If its owner does not obviate it by disliking it, it will become resistance. If its owner does not obviate it by resisting it, it becomes whispering. If its owner does not correct it through discipline, from it will awaken lusts with [his] capriciousness, and it will obstruct one's mind, knowledge, and clear distinction.

This is how it was transmitted in [non-prophetic] traditions: That whims and lusts overwhelm knowledge, intellect, and clear distinction.

- Excerpted from Abu Abd al-Rahman al Sulami's 'Uyub al-nafs wa adwiyatuha', translated by Musa Furber as 'Infamies of the Soul & their Treatments'



How Quietly the Pious Pass Away

By Dr Faisal Nazir

Get off their bed and walk away
Like blessed birds that you feed your grain
Thinking you are taking generous pain
Where will these birds find their food
If you weren't kind, if you weren't good
Know that your charitable bags of grain
Your water, your bread, are a terrible strain
Upon souls who would fly to their heavenly abode
But stay on to gather and lift the load
That you have been amassing all your life
Sins of pleasure, luxury and pride
Be thankful to the birds that bless your roof
For when they leave they leave for good.

Mental Health

M. Bint Hanif

We live in a world where every human being considers themselves to be having a personality free of faults. The illusion of perfectionism rules our lives. Even people who are close to us are often neglected, ignored and undermined on a daily basis, and the issue of mental well-being is completely ignored, often leaving wounds on generations and destroying our future leaders. All this is happening in the name of perfectionism. What a harsh reality!

A great lie which is further destroying the mental well-being of people is that they are constantly being told to be independent. *Be self-sufficient. You do not need anyone. You will be fine. You got this!*

That is not how we are designed! Logically thinking, if a new born baby is not dependent on anybody that child will literally die. Human beings are designed biochemically for connection. They are designed to be co-dependent. They are designed to love each other. They are designed to be in tribes. If we delve into historical knowledge then we will fathom that never in history have people not lived in tribes. It takes the joint effort of five to six people to raise a child, as that is how much emotional connection they are required to have.

We now live in a hyper-independent society which is totally individualistic, teaching everybody that *you are sufficient in your self, your self-improvement, your self-esteem – it is all about self.* We unfortunately no longer have that historical resilience of our predecessors as we are entirely encouraged to be solo. The topic of mental well-being is brushed under the carpet as everybody is expected to be just fine. Counsellors, psychologist, Ulama, trying to assist those in need according to how sahabah stood and aided each other during emotional and physical pain are not taken into any account. This subject is considered 'too' taboo and vague in our society which we have so proudly created.

Our emotional, psychological, and social well-being, all depend upon our mental health. Mental health does not only affect the way we think, feel, and act, but also how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Knowingly or unknowingly when mental ill health is not treated in the initial stages then in most cases our near and dear ones suffer. Children who were subject to harassment at young ages might turn out to be abusers as adults.

According to most forensic psychologists, criminals, serial killers, etc. usually have a traumatizing past of their own, hence the consequences that society has to suffer. These people who suffered from mental ill health were either left untreated or were expected to be okay. They are often told that, "you should've changed for the better due to your past," not realizing the effects that can be embedded on a person's mind from a traumatizing experience. It

is essential that such people are treated for their trauma in time, or else they would bleed on those who had absolutely no idea about their stress.

Memory loss, narcissism, bipolarism, depression, stress and anxiety are a few of the common mental health issues that a major part of society is suffering from mostly due to hidden underlying reasons.

After a blow to the head, a person wanders aimlessly, unable to remember who they are or where they came from. While such sudden, profound loss of memory is rare, memory loss is a problem that affects most people, to a degree.

Whether it's occasional forgetfulness or loss of short-term memory that interferes with daily life, there are many causes of memory loss. Few of them are excessive over the counter pills, and sleep deprivation. Both quantity and quality of sleep are important to memory. Getting too little sleep or waking frequently in the night can lead to fatigue, which interferes with the ability to consolidate and retrieve information. Moreover, depression and stress are also very significant causes of memory loss. Being depressed can make it difficult to pay attention and focus, which can affect memory. Stress and anxiety can also get in the way of concentration. When one is tensed and the mind is overstimulated or distracted, the ability to remember can suffer. Stress caused by an emotional trauma can also lead to memory loss.

Stroke, underactive or overactive thyroid glands, stress and infections such as HIV and syphilis can also affect the memory.

To evaluate memory loss, a doctor will take a medical history, perform a physical exam -- including a neurologic exam -- and ask questions to test mental ability. Depending on the results, further evaluation may include blood and urine tests, nerve tests, and imaging tests of the brain.

One may also be sent for neuropsychological testing, which is a battery of tests that help pinpoint the memory loss.

Treatment for memory loss depends on the cause. In many cases, it may be reversible with treatment. Memory loss from medications may resolve with a change in medication. Nutritional supplements can be useful against memory loss caused by a nutritional deficiency. And treating depression may be helpful for memory when depression is a factor.

In some cases - such as following a stroke - therapy may help people remember how to do certain tasks such as walking or tying shoes. In others, memory may improve over time.

Let us also look at narcissism. Narcissistic personality disorder is a mental health condition in which people have an unreasonably high sense of their own importance. They need and seek too much attention and want people to admire them. People with this disorder may lack the ability to understand or care about the feelings of others. But behind this mask of extreme confidence, they are not sure of their self-worth and are easily upset by the slightest criticism.

A narcissistic personality disorder causes problems in many areas of life, such as relationships, work, school or financial matters. People with narcissistic personality disorder may generally be unhappy and disappointed when they're not given the special favors or admiration that they believe they deserve. They may find their relationships troubled and unfulfilling, and other people may not enjoy being around them.

Treatment for narcissistic personality disorder centers around talk therapy, also called psychotherapy.

Narcissistic personality disorder affects more males than females, and it often begins in the teens or early adulthood. Some children may show traits of narcissism, but this is often typical for their age and doesn't mean they'll go on to develop narcissistic personality disorder.

Scientists believe that the full onset of narcissistic personality disorder may occur when interpersonal development is compromised, for example, being born with an oversensitive temperament, or learning manipulative behavior from parents or peers, or being excessively praised for good behaviors and excessively criticized for bad behaviors.

Next, there is this issue of 'trauma'. Trauma can occur after having an head injury, divorce, death of a loved one, harassment, abuse, whether it be physical, emotional or financial abuse. Trauma is often neglected and is one of the main reasons why we see individuals with different attitudes ranging from extreme aggression to extreme politeness.

Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, or some natural disaster.

Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Long-term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea.

While these feelings are normal, some people have difficulty moving on with their lives. Psychologists can help them find constructive ways of managing their emotions. Ulama have advised people with trauma to increase in their recitation of the holy Qur'an and make excessive zikr. It is imperative that trauma is discussed and healed in time. Open discussions and healthy sessions may improve the mental well-being of an individual whether it be a child, or an adult.

Another type of anxiety disorder is postnatal post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is also known as birth trauma. A woman may develop postnatal PTSD if she experiences traumatic events during labor or childbirth. This is another neglected aspect of trauma in our society. A woman goes through a range of emotions after giving birth and has the sudden responsibility of being a full-time caretaker of another human being.

Some people mistakenly feel that having a new baby makes up for any kind traumatic experiences. Or they may think that enjoying being a new parent means that a woman will soon forget about her trauma. But these traumatic experiences can have a negative effect on her relationship with her baby and the people around her. It is important that a woman suffering from such trauma be treated with immense love, support and care.

These are only a few examples of certain kinds of traumas that need to be dealt with in our society. There are so many other kinds of traumas that need to be paid attention to if we wish our loved ones to lead emotionally, mentally, and physically stable lives.

The Islamic system aims at creating a balance in the Muslim's life by putting the matters of life into perspective, rearranging priorities accordingly, and harmonizing all circles of relationships between the individual and his inner and outer environments. Allah ﷻ says: Seek the life to come by means of what Allah ﷻ granted you, but do not neglect your rightful share in this world. Do good to others as Allah ﷻ has done good to you. Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah ﷻ does not love those who do this (Al-Qasas, 28:77). People feel depressed or sad when

this harmonious equilibrium is disturbed, in which case Islam steps in, not to condemn the feeling, but to offer a solution for regaining psychological and mental balance.

What Is the Connection Between Mental Health and Islam?

Spiritual Resilience – Islam offers a spiritual sanctuary for Muslims to live a peaceful life by using their inner strengths and having a strong relationship with the ultimate power, Allah ﷻ. Islam acknowledges the importance of spiritual status as an inner power that can be exercised to have a calm mind, healthy consciousness, and positive thoughts.

Role of Patience – Islam attaches great importance to patience and it is the focus of about two hundred verses of the Quran and referred to indirectly in many others. Patience is a virtue that enables Muslims to proceed towards worthy goals, undeflected by adverse circumstances.

Evil Eye (Ayn/Nazar) – Belief in the evil eye is found in the Quran based on the following verse: “And from the evil of the envied when he envies,” [Al-Falaq (The Daybreak), 113:5]. The concept of an evil eye is the belief that an individual can look at people, animals, or objects and cause harm due to jealousy.

Spiritual Possession - The belief that Jinn has the power to possess an individual causing harm to the person and those around them.

What Are Some Misconceptions about Mental Health in The Muslim Community?

Mental health, as a taboo subject in the Muslim community, leads to embarrassment and fear, for the members of the community who do have some mental illness. This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed so that those suffering can get the help needed.

Another misconception in the Muslim community is that mental health is associated with being “non-religious” or “not religious enough.” Many factors may contribute to the development of mental health issues, so it is not fair to oversimplify multi-factorial medical conditions in this way because it dismisses the potential role of mental health professionals in helping.

Many Muslims believe that today’s mental health issues are tests from Allah ﷻ and therefore go unaddressed.

If someone has faith in Allah ﷻ, they shouldn't be depressed or have mental illnesses!

As a Muslim, you get affected by life’s troubles and disturbing thoughts like everyone else, but you can deal with them in a much better manner because you have a clear roadmap of where you came from, where you are going and why; so you have a head start having this fundamental knowledge from its source.

Someone who feels completely lost and alone in the face of a crisis would probably feel helpless and depressed. But someone who feels supported by a compassionate Allah ﷻ Who genuinely cares, Who listens to desperate pleas, and Who grants generous help, has a better chance of getting back on track much faster because there is a strong helping hand to reach out for while dealing with life’s troubles.

“And for those who fear Allah ﷻ, He always prepares a way out, and He provides for him from sources he never could imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah ﷻ, sufficient is Allah ﷻ for him. For Allah ﷻ will surely accomplish His purpose: verily, for all things has Allah ﷻ appointed a due proportion.”(Quran, 65: 2-3)

Is consulting an Imam or religious scholar enough to address someone’s mental illnesses or personal challenges?

The majority of Imams are not trained in mental health (or mental health first aid). Although many Muslims seek advice or services from Imams, there may be a gap in understanding as displayed by an Imam and mental health professional

What is Islam’s role in addressing mental illnesses and mental health challenges people face?

Islam does not require us to be superhuman. If one experiences negative feelings, he is encouraged to resist them with positive thoughts and actions, if possible, or to seek professional help if the case is clinical.


People feel depressed or sad when this harmonious equilibrium is disturbed, in which case Islam steps in, not to condemn the feeling, but to offer a solution for regaining psychological and mental balance. May Allah ﷻ pave a way out for all those suffering in some way or the other. Ameen.

The Drawing Room Diaries

By Mariam Majid Sharif

At ev'ry Word a
Reputation dies...

(Alexander Pope)



Had the walls of any drawing room ever endured such an onslaught of sounds like the ones of Mrs. Akhtar's drawing room that Friday evening once her annual Eid Gathering was underway? And what a strange blend of sounds! Some strange humming, a dictatorial snap, buzz of sycophantic agreement, sharp barbs and a few saccharine utterances here and there. One would think a room full of elegant

ladies, exuding sophistication, would have boasted a classier merging of cultured voices and suave undertones but that was hardly the case.

Mrs. Akhtar kept flitting from one end to another, ensuring she spent several minutes with each guest and assuring herself that everyone was keeping themselves amused. There was absolutely no



doubt about the latter. Mrs. Saleem, a formidable matchmaker with a dominating presence, had the attention of the ladies around her and was regaling them with tales from the wedding of a common friend's daughter.

'Not that I should be saying this but I was very disturbed you know, such an odd couple,' revealed Mrs. Saleem, 'why did the Sheikhs settle for such a

plain girl when their son deserved someone who matched him in looks.' *'thi bhi saanwli ooper say'* ('she wasn't even fair'). They should have asked me, I would've recommended someone fairer and more striking in looks.'

While the other two ladies with her hummed their affirmations, Mrs. Sajjad, a peacemaker in her own right, rose to the defense of the absent young bride in question earnestly saying,

'But Aapa I've heard the family is exemplary and Mrs. Sheikh and her daughters couldn't stop singing her praises. And when I met her last week, she was very happy how her son and daughter-in-law were getting along wonderfully.'

But Mrs. Saleem, resolute in her belief of *'gori khubsoorat bahu'* ('fair, beautiful daughter-in-law'), refused to budge from her stance for after all, in her matchmaking business, there were some principles one simply does not back down from.

A social gathering of 'like-minded' individuals and absolutely no mention of an unexpected windfall or someone's financial decline? Ah, but the Irfan sisters were never the ones to disappoint with their relentless pursuit of discovering the who, what, why and how in their careful maneuvering of the local society. Sure enough, clear ringing tones could be heard over the multitude of voices, fraught with insinuations.

'...all under wraps and of course you didn't hear anything from us... but word has it that the Qazis have sold their house and moved back to their ancestral home... Some investments gone horribly wrong and well, they had it coming I would say, what with their interest dealings, for don't they say the sins catch up with you sooner or later? '

A hum of confirmation, some interested nods; was there a sound of dissent, a look of reproach somewhere in the crowd? But of course, there is no possibility of objection when it comes to the self-appointed judge and jury of mankind.

Meanwhile a couple of young ladies had gathered around the refreshment table, discussing the latest fashions. Clad in their fineries, such a display of sartorial splendor would have caught anyone's eye except that it was the voice that would grab anyone's interest or rather, the cutting edge which was sharp enough to cut cheese.

'What a lovely dress you're wearing Sara, the colour especially suits you. ' a pause. 'Oh wait, I think I remember a friend buying this. Isn't it from Zara

Shahjahan? Last year's collection I believe? I mean their other collection you know, so good for people looking for cheaper budget friendly options...'

Sara, too prudent to be susceptible to the manner she was addressed in or more likely very much accustomed to it, ignored the jibe and moved on to discuss the more scintillating subject of the current gossip at their college.

All this while, Mrs. Saleem, keeping true to her profession, kept a discreet but calculating eye on the young girls, making mental notes in her ledger. But not for long, as Mrs. Akhtar hurried towards her purposefully having her own issues to discuss with the experienced matchmaker. The course of rishta-finding (matchmaking) never did run smooth, or so they say and Mrs. Akhtar was lamenting the very dilemma she had found herself in.

'...Such a difficult trial Aapa I tell you. This '*larki-dhoonda*' (finding a girl). If you are lucky enough to find a pretty girl your son likes, the problem is the education. One would think in today's modern times it would be fairly easy to find someone with a UK degree but all we see are NUST and FAST graduates and of course that won't do for my Ali. We have shortlisted two girls for now but the choice is very difficult to make. One is *MashaAllah* very tall and beautiful and the other was born and bred in London and is obviously fluent in English. You see my dilemma?'

Quite accustomed to such predicaments, having been in the business for decades, Mrs. Saleem sympathised with the distraught mother but suddenly recalled something.

'Oh so I gather things ended with the Farooqs? I hope they didn't take it to heart when you told them; Mrs. Farooq was so dead set on the match.'

Faced with a question Mrs. Akhtar could not but answer truthfully, she waved her hand midair airily, 'Ah well with things so busy I didn't really get time to contact her. I'm sure they must've understood how things stand by now,' a titter followed and the conversation moved on to more compelling subjects.

And so it continues. The Royal Albert China set is out. The Queen Annes filled with dainty delicacies. The tea is served.

As a host silently flits from one corner of the room to other, making sure her plate is never empty and ready with conversation where it is required, she does not fail to recognise the sheer irony of the fact

that a mere three weeks before this Eid Gathering, the words of Surah Hujarat had resonated within the same walls. The study of simple yet cautionary rules of socializing should have set a precedent for all gatherings to follow and yet we seem to slip back easily enough and find ourselves following the self-made edifying (apparently) edicts of the society around us. The Drawing Room hypocrisy becomes all too stifling as it became obvious that once Ramadan was over, religion was back in its place with a cursory glance given now and then.

Being someone who has always felt at home with writing, I chose to see and show a mirror instead of penning an informative treatise with references from Surah Hujarat which might have come off as preachy, as a reminder to myself and everyone. Living as we are, don't we all have a Mrs. Saleem, Mrs. Akhtar, Sara and the Irfan Sisters somewhere inside us, compelling us to take their personas to fit in whichever social circle we are a part of? Sometimes perpetrators and sometimes victims of the very vicious cycle of making assumptions, casting aspersions, casual belittling and just being inconsiderate and unkind without even realizing it, simply for the transient pleasure of it. How fond we are of saying, 'oh I'm not backbiting of course. I can say this to her face' or 'Oh, I shouldn't be saying this but..' So smoothly is this done.

Alhamdulillah for all the Qur'an classes and *Tafseer* sessions and for the people who opened their houses for them, but let us not limit them to Ramadan. No *Daura-e-Quran* is complete without Surah Hujarat and how can we be so hypocritical as to sit through it and then continue on after Eid with life as we knew it? Bring out your Qur'ans and your notes. Let us read through this beautiful gem of a Surah and endeavor to practice its social commandments so simply given out and imbue our gatherings with love, harmony and appreciation in lieu of belittlement, assumptions (false or otherwise) and standing as self-appointed judge and jury. Additionally, I draw the reader's attention to the oft-reiterated Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ:

Abdullāh ibn 'Amr and Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (may Allah be pleased with both of them) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The true Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe. (Al-Bukhari-Book1, Vol 2-Hadith 9)

And thus, the writer rests her case.

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Contributed by Muhammad Haris

A kindergarten teacher decided to let her class play a game. The teacher told each child in the class to bring along a plastic bag containing few potatoes. Each potato would be named after a person the child hates; the number of potatoes that a child would put in his/her plastic bag would depend on the number of people he/she hates.

When the day came, every child brought some potatoes bearing the name of the person he/she hated. Some had two potatoes with them, some had three, while some had up to five potatoes! The teacher then told the children to carry with them the potatoes in the plastic bag wherever they went for the next one week.

Days passed by and the children started to complain of the unpleasant odour given out by the rotten potatoes. Besides, those having five potatoes also had to carry heavier bags.

After one week, the children were relieved because the game had finally ended. The teacher then asked:

"How did you feel while carrying the potatoes with you for the whole week?" The children let out their frustrations and started complaining of the trouble that they had to go through while having to carry the heavy and smelly potatoes wherever they went.

Then the teacher told them the hidden meaning behind the game.

The teacher said: "This is exactly the situation when you carry your hatred for somebody inside your heart. The stench of that hatred contaminates your heart and you carry it with you wherever you go. If you cannot tolerate the smell of rotten potatoes for just one week, can you imagine what it is like to have the stench of hatred in your heart for an entire lifetime?"

"Throw away any hatred for anyone from your heart so that you will not carry sins for a lifetime. Forgiving others is the best attitude to take up! Forgive and forget!"

Work for Working Right

By Syeda Samar Mubashir

"If you trust in yourself... and believe in your dreams... and follow your star... you'll still get beaten by people who spent their time working hard and learning things and weren't so lazy."

— Terry Pratchett, *The Wee Free Men*

Majority of the youngsters in our society spend long hours doing things that involve mental energy. For example, they spend long hours surfing on the internet, playing video or computer games, chatting with friends through messaging, watching movies and cartoons, or studying. However, if you ask them to do some chore like fetching milk from the milk-shop, or cleaning up their closet, or cleaning their washroom, or changing the bed sheets, they start yawning and mumbling and giving excuses for not doing such tasks. Be it girls or boys, we can see zero interest in the youngsters of our time when it comes to making physical effort or learning physical skills, which has proven to be one of the main factors in the breakdown of our society. This particular problem is present in our

society's almost every domain of interaction. Be it a house, a hotel, a marketplace, a government or private organization, a company, an institute, you will see people around you who do not like to work. We simply blame traffic policemen for not making due efforts and earning money by corruption but we neglect the root cause of the problem; be it anywhere. The root cause is lack of tarbiyah for doing hard work right from a young age. Why does a beggar try so hard to convince you to give some money? Because he has been trained in begging and not working. Similarly, when someone is trained in the art of physical work, you will never see them begging because it feels embarrassing to them.

And imagine the embarrassment most of the young girls have to face when they have their first encounter with the kitchen at their in-law's home, and it turns out plain and clear that they know absolutely nothing about cooking or homemaking. And imagine how would a newly-wed young



man feel when his wife discovers that his daddy or mom did all the outdoor chores all his life in order to let his son study well, and the son ended up knowing nothing except how to produce correct answers to questions. This is what happens when children are made to 'just study and play' all through their academic career and they finish their university overfilled with complex theories, formulas, and ideas while being absolutely blank in matters concerning physical work and household management.

Parents in our society do not think of this issue as a crucial one but rather consider their endless endeavours and service to children as an *ehsan* done by them. Undoubtedly, parents' efforts must be appreciated. However, in the long run, it turns out to be a wrong done to them, though parents being unaware of it. When youngsters are pampered and too much taken care of then what comes out is not a fruit but weeds—overgrown, greedy, and selfish weeds.

If we wish to see our society as a society of active, motivated, optimistic, self-efficacious and productive citizens, what we will essentially have to do is to train young children to indulge in physical work from a very young age. Parents will have to realize that teaching their children what they themselves know is the real *ehsan* rather than making children reliant on parents for whole life time. There are numerous benefits in teaching children working skills and yields positive results in later years of life as well. Knowing working skills is fruitful in a number of ways if we realize;

-Hard work is not a torture: "Without hard work, nothing grows but weeds." - Gordon B. Hinckley

If children are used to working hard, they develop patience, and forbearance and can get along well in all situations in life. If we compare the physical, emotional and psychological health of children who involve in physical work with those who only engage in mental forms of work, we see that the former ones not only develop good cognitive skills but also grow strong emotionally and psychologically. Moreover, children have a lot of physical energy which must be productively used, rather than spent in fighting, or useless activity. Making youngsters do physically hard works like rearranging pots in the garden, or painting pots, or fetching something from the market can satisfy their need to utilize energy in a positive manner.

-Working for oneself and being independent helps nation progress: Many a children are spoiled by their parents by spoon feeding them from day one to the time they finish studies—everything is presented to them the way they want—due to which they end up being selfish and demanding. In the end, such people develop a low-image of their self, no matter how proud they may seem. They will always shirk away from work, and will assume themselves as useless beings. Whereas, when a child sees the result of his hand's work, it helps him see himself as a productive and useful being. As Joseph Conrad said, "I don't like work--no man does--but I like what is in the work--the chance to find yourself. Your own reality--for yourself not for others--what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means." (from Heart of Darkness) Plus, teaching children to how to wash clothes or watering the garden can nurture independence in them. They will not scream for their moms when they want their clothes clean at the age 12 or 22. This will also save the women of our nations from becoming mere working machines.

-Working for others and being helpful develops integrity in the nation: When work becomes a habit from an early age, people don't mind working, be it for themselves or others. Work becomes part of them and is not hard on the nafs of people who are used to it. When children learn to work for others they develop qualities like *futuwwa* and *khidmah* which they later benefit from in their lives. Many individuals fail to develop healthy relationships because all they have ever learned is to seek benefit only for themselves a trait that springs from a 'inconsiderate' attitude which repels people from them. The spirit to work for others is required in every domain of interaction in order to build integrity in the nation. Be it the in-laws, one's fellows, employer, or anyone else, when you are in the habit of working, you like to work. And when you like to work, it is easier to do the job right and happily.

"Hide not your talents, they for use were made,
What's a sundial in the shade?"

— Benjamin Franklin



'ADI BIN HATIM AT-TAYEE

*"You believed when they
disbelieved, and you recognized
when they denied and you
proved loyal when they betrayed
and you drew near when they
turned their backs."*

—Umar bin Al-Khattaab

In the ninth year of Hijra, one of the Arab kings accepted Islam and finally swore allegiance to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ after having opposed him for a prolonged period of time. His name was 'Adi bin Hatim at Tayee ﷺ and he was the son of a man whose name was synonymous with generosity. 'Adi ﷺ inherited his father's kingdom as well as the tribe of Tayy and levied taxes equal to a quarter of their revenue.

As the Blessed Prophet ﷺ proclaimed his summons to Truth and guidance, and multitudes embraced Islam, 'Adi ﷺ uneasily perceived a potential threat to his kingdom with the growing power of the Prophet ﷺ. Fearing that the Muslims would eventually topple his throne, he fiercely opposed the Prophet ﷺ and hated him without having ever set eyes on him. His enmity persisted for almost twenty years until Allah ﷻ opened his heart for acceptance of the Truth.

Let us hear the fascinating narrative of his conversion in his own words:

"None of the Arabs hated Rasul Allah ﷺ as much as I did ever since I heard about him. For I was a nobleman and moreover a Christian who taxed my people up to a quarter of their wealth, as was the prevailing custom among contemporary Arab rulers.

As soon as I heard about Rasul Allah ﷺ, I loathed him. And as his power and influence grew widespread, and his armies began conquering land East and West in Arabia, I instructed the slave who tended to my camels, 'Keep a healthy, obedient she-camel in readiness, and tie her close by. And if you hear that the army of Muhammad ﷺ or any of his military troops have crossed these lands, instantly inform me.'

One evening, my slave came running towards me, uttering, 'My master, the time has come for you to follow whatever course of action you had resolved upon since Muhammad's ﷺ army is entering your land.'

I exclaimed, 'Why is that? May your mother weep for you!'

He said, 'Indeed I noticed some flags moving around the boundaries so I asked about them and was informed that these belong to the armies of Muhammad ﷺ.'

I told him, 'Prepare the she-camel and bring her to me.'

I arose swiftly and summoned my household and children so we could depart from our beloved homeland and we fled towards Syria where we could live with fellow Christians.

I had been in such haste to gather all the family members together that it was only after we had crossed the point of danger that I checked everyone and discovered that I had left behind my sister in our homeland, Najd, along with some remaining members from Tayy.

There was no way I could return to her. So I proceeded along with those accompanying me until we reached Syria and settled there with my fellow believers. As for my sister, my worst fears were justified.

While I was in Syria, news reached me that Muhammad's ﷺ army had attacked my land and had taken my sister as captive along with others. They were taken to Yathrib.

She was kept along with the other captives in an enclosure near the door of the masjid. As the Blessed Prophet ﷺ passed by her, she arose and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, the father has died, and the one to whom I was entrusted has disappeared! Show clemency to me, may Allah show you clemency!'

He asked, 'To whom were you entrusted?'

She replied, 'Abi bin Hatim.'

He replied, 'The one who fled from Allah and His Messenger?'

And then he left her.

The next day, he again passed by again. Once more she repeated her words and once more he gave the same reply.

The next day, he passed by her but she had despaired so she did not speak to him. A man behind him gestured to her to arise and speak. So she stood up and spoke, 'O Messenger of Allah, the father has died and the one to whom I was entrusted has disappeared! Show clemency to me, may Allah show you clemency!'

He answered, 'I have already done so.'

She replied, 'I wish to join my family in Syria.'

He replied, 'But don't make haste to leave until you find someone you can trust from your people to convey you to Syria. Once you find one you can completely trust, then let me know.'

After the Blessed Prophet ﷺ departed, she asked about the man who had gestured to her to speak. She was informed it was 'Ali bin Abi Talib.

So she stayed there until a group of riders came and among them was the one she trusted. Then she came to Rasul Allah ﷺ and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, a group of people have come. Not only do I trust them, they also possess the necessary resources to convey me.' The Blessed Prophet ﷺ provided her with clothing, and gifted her a camel for travelling and gave her money for her expenses. She set off with the riders.

We began following her news which gradually filtered through to us and soon were eagerly anticipating her arrival. We could scarcely believe the story of how generous Muhammad ﷺ had been to her, considering my behavior towards him.

By Allah I was seated amongst my family when I spotted a woman seated in a howdah, headed towards us.

I exclaimed, 'Daughter of Hatim, it is her!'

When the camel halted, she raced towards me, exclaiming, "O violator of blood ties! O cruel one! You carried off your wife and children to safety but abandoned the remnants of your father, (his child) and one entitled to the mantle of your protection."

I replied, 'My beloved sister, what you say is absolutely true.'

I began placating her until she was mollified and relented; she recounted her story and it was exactly as I had heard. She was both intelligent and perceptive, so I asked her, 'What is your opinion of this man (Muhammad ﷺ)?'

She replied, 'By Allah, I feel that you should join him as soon as you can. If he is truly a prophet, there is great merit in joining him speedily. And if he is just a king, then you should never be abased before him because of who you are.'

So I made preparations for travelling and set forth until I came to Rasul Allah ﷺ in Madina without any assurance of safety.

I had heard that he had said, 'I surely hope Allah will place the hand of 'Adi in my hand.' I entered before him while he was in the masjid and I greeted him.

He said, 'Who is this man?'

I replied, 'Abi bin Hatim.'

He rose to meet me, took my hand and led me off to his house. By Allah, we were proceeding to his home when he was accosted by a frail old woman, who was accompanied by a child. She began discussing some needs of hers with him. He stayed with both of them until he fulfilled their needs while I stood by.

I said to myself, 'By Allah, he cannot be a king!'

Then he took my hand and proceeded with me until we reached his home. Then he picked up a leather cushion stuffed with palm fibers and tossed it at me, saying, 'Sit on this.'

I felt embarrassed before him and said, 'No, you should sit on it.'

But he said, 'No, you (sit).'

So I complied and I sat on the cushion while the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sat on the ground, for there was nothing else in the house.

And I said to myself, 'By Allah, this is not the behavior of a king.'

Then he turned towards me and said, 'O 'Aid bin Hatim! Do you not oscillate between two religions, Christianity and Sabeanism?'

I replied, 'Certainly.'

Then he said, 'Do you not tax your people up to a quarter of their revenue and take from them what is not permissible in your religion?'

I answered, 'Yes,' and I recognized that he was a divinely appointed Prophet.

Then he said, 'O 'Adi, perhaps what prevents you from entering this religion is what you see from entering this religion in what you see of the poverty of the Muslims. By Allah, soon such an abundance of wealth will be showered upon that there will be none to take charity.

And 'Adi, perhaps what prevents you from entering this religion is what you see of the few numbers of the Muslims and the vast numbers of their enemies. By Allah, soon there will come a time when you hear of a woman set forth from Qadisiya on her camel until she visits the Holy

House, fearing none but Allah ﷻ.

And perhaps what prevents you from entering this religion is that you see that power and kingship rest in the hands of the non-Muslims. By Allah, soon you will hear of the white palaces of Babel having been conquered by the Muslims and the treasures of Chosroes bin Hormuz transferred to them.'

I asked, 'the treasures of Chosroes bin Hormuz?'

He affirmed, 'Yes, the treasures of Chosroes bin Hormuz.'

It was then that I uttered the declaration of faith and accepted Islam."

'Adi bin Hatim ﷺ lived an extremely long life and he used to say, "I have seen two (predictions) realized and the third remains. By Allah, it is inevitable.

For I have seen a woman set forth unafraid from Qadisiya on her camel, until she reached this Holy House. And I was among the troops who attacked and captured the treasures of Chosroes. And I swear by Allah surely the third will happen."

Allah ﷻ vindicated the word of his Prophet ﷺ. In the reign of the great ascetic and devout Caliph, 'Umar bin Abdul 'Aziz, the third prediction came to pass. Such vast wealth was granted to the Muslims that the caller would be proclaiming, "Is there any deserving of zakaat?" And none would reply.

Thus Rasul Allah's ﷺ predictions were realized and 'Adi bin Hatim's ﷺ fulfilled.

- Excerpted here with permission, from 'Stories from the Lives of the Sahaba' (Vol 1) by Dr Abdur Rahman Rafat Pasha; Trans. by Umm Husain



“Folk” Western Philosophy

By Dr. Asad Zaman

*In this article,
some fundamental
ideas of Western
philosophy are
explained, which
are the basis for
modern social
sciences.*

Highbrow European Philosophy:

Q: What is "Knowledge"? A question of central importance, regarding which there is a huge diversity of views. Here, I will not discuss the Islamic tradition at all. Rather, I will discuss how the thinking of Western philosophers evolved in directions which are so bizarre, alien, and far from common sense that they are virtually incomprehensible to the common man. Yet, these philosophies form the foundations of modern Western social science. Because the conceptual framework of Western understanding of human beings and society is built on these foundations, this framework is absorbed by all educated in universities and absorbed by the general public via diffusion of ideas.

To understand Western thought today, especially for Muslims, we need to understand these philosophies, and yet the complex and sophisticated philosophical thought, as it evolved over three centuries or more of development, would require many years of study to understand.

The Lowbrow Approach:

The approach we take here is to abandon highbrow philosophy and instead study the impact of this philosophy on the general public (this includes highly educated non-philosophers, who are completely unaware of the philosophical foundations of their thought). I will call this "folk" philosophy, to distinguish it from the highbrow version.

There are two philosophical terms of central importance which have been debated for centuries: *Epistemology or the Theory of Knowledge* – what is the nature of human knowledge? What can we know, and how do we come to know it? How can we arrive at truth, and how can we be certain that what we know is true? The second is *Ontology, the study of existence*. What are the objects and effects which exist in the real world? Does God exist, do angels exist? Do atoms, electrons, and gravity exist as real forces in the external world? These are all questions of Ontology.

There are centuries of complex and convoluted discussions in nearly incomprehensible technical language of philosophers on both of these topics. However, none of these controversies or debates are taught to non-philosophers. Instead, these philosophies shape the subject matter which is taught and the style and manner in which it is

presented. Without knowing the meaning of the words 'epistemology' and 'ontology', students absorb controversial conclusions of complex debates regarding these matters without any awareness of the philosophy. They learn that "human knowledge" consists of what is taught in the universities, and we acquire knowledge using the methods currently in use in university for imparting education. What exists is what the textbooks discuss and described, and ideas about God and angels which are never discussed either do not exist, or else, their existence is of no relevance or importance for human knowledge. Thus, folk philosophy comes into existence via the process of education, without conscious awareness or discussion that students are learning a particular epistemology and ontology.

A Lowbrow History of Western Philosophy:

Unfortunately, the edifice of Western intellectual thought is built on dramatically flawed foundations. The easiest way to understand this is to study how this thought process emerged and developed over the course of centuries. We will take an outsider's perspective and also hugely over-simplify, because we are concerned with the development of the folk philosophy that lies at the foundations of modern Western education.

Western philosophy begins with the trauma created by loss of faith, (reasons for which have been explained in greater detail in my article "European Transition to Secular Thought") . This led to a deep examination of epistemology. European historical experience showed their philosophers that widespread consensus on existence of God, and deep heartfelt belief, to the extent that masses of people were willing to die for these beliefs, did not suffice for knowledge. Even though it was nearly universally deeply believed, it turned out that Christianity was wrong. *How can we protect ourselves from such mass deceptions in the future? How can we build knowledge on certain foundation?* These were the question of burning importance for Western philosophers in the period of the European Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment was the name of questioning all inherited and traditional beliefs and subjecting all pieces of human knowledge to the test of reason. Some of the consequences of this elevation of the mind and reason, above all other human faculties, are detailed and explained below.

Trauma of Loss of Faith:

Somewhat arbitrarily, we may start with David Hume, who argued that human knowledge came only from what we could observe and deduce from logic – facts and reason. He famously proposed to burn all books which went beyond observations and logic, since they only contained “sophistry and illusion”. Loss of faith in God led Europeans to lose trust in the testimony of the heart, and to deny the unseen.

One of the key philosophers in the development of thought was Kant. His philosophy is too complex to be described in any depth, but the lowbrow version can easily be explained. Kant distinguished between the phenomena (which we observe) and the noumena (the hidden reality which generates the observations). He argued that the true nature of hidden reality was forever out of reach. The attempt to deduce what reality is like from the observations was doomed to failure, since we could never know more about reality than what we could observe of it. Instead of this age-old pursuit of philosophers, he proposed to launch a Copernican Revolution in Philosophy by abandoning the search for truth as in illusion. Instead, he said we should analyze how our mind creates coherent structures of the incoherent surface observations that we see. He argued that many structures that we believe to be part of external reality are actually projections of the human mind onto reality. (This point is explained in greater depth in *Kant's Blunder, Errors of Empiricism, and Beyond Kant*). Even though Kant did not deny the existence of hidden reality – in fact, he strongly supported it — he did make it possible for future philosophers to say that we may completely ignore this hidden reality for practical purposes. All that exists is what we observe and what our mind constructs from these observations. After many twists and turns of thought, this eventually led to the development of models in economics which have no connection to reality.

Emergence of Logical Positivism:

Logical Positivism is a philosophy which attempts to explain the difference between science and religion, and prove that science leads to certain knowledge, while religion is nothing more than superstition. In fact, this philosophy is a misunderstanding of science. This misunderstanding was used to construct the foundations for an entirely new

quantitative and mathematical approach to the “Social Sciences”, different from the older name of “Humanities”, which reflects the qualitative arts and literature component much better.

David Hume argued that religious books should be burnt, and the books of science were the only source of human knowledge. Since then, philosophers struggled to find a way to differentiate between the two, to show that science leads to valid and reliable knowledge, while religion is just superstition. In the 20th century, the *Emergence of Positivism* actually accomplished this goal.

This philosophy asserted that meaningful sentences must be verifiable by logic or facts of observation. For statements about angels, if no scientific observations could be found to either confirm or deny their existence, then the statements were meaningless. Even though this philosophy was later rejected by philosophers, it spread like wildfire, and continues to dominate thought among non-philosophers. This was because it was the fulfillment of the dream of David Hume, and the culmination of centuries of efforts to achieve this goal, of cleanly and sharply separating religion and science. This is where it becomes essential to separate highbrow and lowbrow philosophy.

Among the highbrow philosophers, logical positivism is a thing of past, rejected more than seventy years ago. While the conversation among philosophers has moved on, among the non-philosophers, logical positivism continues to be the dominant approach, and its central ideas are widely accepted. The foundations of economics and econometrics are based on logical positivism, and even though logical positivism has been rejected and refuted, the foundations have not been re-examined and re-constructed.

From the point of view of understanding the mindset of European intellectuals, and the foundations of modern social sciences, it is essential to understand the philosophy of logical positivism, why it was so attractive and what were its weaknesses which led to its rejection. This is required to cleanse the minds of the general public of the ‘folk version of logical positivism’ which is automatically absorbed via the process of Western education.



Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani دامت برکاتہم

Translation by Kaiser Nizamani

At Lasbela House

We stayed in an apartment at Campbell Street near Burns Road until Ramadan 1374 AH (circa May 1955). We stayed there for five years which proved to be very fortuitous for us. It was during our stay in this house that we were blessed with the opportunity of performing Hajj, about which I have mentioned before. It was also here that my elder brother Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Rafi' (*mudda zilluhum*) completed his memorization of the Qur'an and also recited the Qur'an in Tarawih prayers for the first time. While we were staying in this house, Dār al-'Ulūm was established in Nanak Warah and we formally began our studies. It was here that our elder sister respected Atīqah Khatoon, who had arrived from Deoband as a widow, got married to Hadhrat Mawlana Noor Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him). It was here that our second sister, whom we call Chhoti Āpa, got married to the late Hafiz Shafqat Ali of Lahore, and our elder brother, respected Muhammad Razi, also got married here, with his wedding being conducted by Hadhrat Mawlana Muhammad Yusuf Binnori (may Allah have mercy on him). And it was during our stay in this house that our respected father (may Allah have mercy on him) and his companions, as members of the Board of Islamic Teachings, drafted the Islamic foundations

of the Constitution of the country, as a result of which a first draft of the Constitution, together with enforceable Islamic articles, was prepared in 1954. (Even though Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad later dismissed the Constituent Assembly and threw the country off track, whereupon this draft Constitution was deposited into the vault of forgetfulness).

Despite all this, this was also a rented house and our respected father (may Allah have mercy on him) desired to have his own house in Karachi. Before migrating from India, our respected father (*quddisa sirruhu*) owned a sizable estate. Besides a large house, he also owned inherited agricultural lands as well as a garden which he had planted with much zeal, and mango trees of that garden were expected to bear their first fruits in the year he migrated to Pakistan. However, our respected father (*quddisa sirruhu*) used to say: "The day I took the step out of the house and the garden, all those possessions left my heart." After our migration, the Indian Government took possession of all those properties.

A long time after this, Pakistan and India made an agreement according to which migrants who had left behind their properties due to the population exchange would be allotted a share, according to a defined formula, from the abandoned properties in

the new country. As a result, in lieu of the properties he had left behind in India, our respected father (may Allah have mercy on him) received a plot of land in Karachi's locality of Lasbela House, on which he built a four-room house. (I remember that our respected father (may Allah have mercy on him) had mentioned that Rs. 8000 had been spent in building those four rooms.)

Construction of that house was completed in Ramadan 1374 AH and we were awaiting Eid to move in. We brothers decided to spend the 27th night of Ramadan al-Mubarak by conducting Shabīna on the roof of the house. My respected brother Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Rafī' (*mudda zilluhum*) was Māshā Allah a Ḥāfiẓ. He invited several of his classmates who had also memorized the Qur'an and conducted Shabīna in Tarawih prayer itself. Probably ten or twelve Juz of the Qur'an were recited in the Tarawih prayer. And after Eid, on the 4th of Shawwal 1374 AH (circa 25 May 1955), we moved into that house.

While we could walk to the madrasa from our house at Burns Road, the house at Lasbela House was around three to three-and-a-half miles away from the madrasa, so we two brothers would cycle there. Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Rafī' Sahib (*mudda zilluhum*) would ride the bicycle while I would sit either behind him on the carrier or on the frame in front. Sometimes, in case the cycle was unavailable for some reason, we would have to travel by bus, in which case we had to change two buses to reach the madrasa.

Trip to Lahore and Deoband

In this same academic year, when I was twelve years old, my respected mother had to undertake two journeys; one was to Lahore, while the second was to Deoband, where our respected mother wished to meet her brothers and other relatives. This was in the middle of my academic semester and these journeys were expected to take around a month or more. Absence of such a long period would be detrimental to my studies. However, I was only twelve years old at the time and my mother could also not travel without me, nor could I stay without her. I therefore departed together with her on the 1st of November 1955. Our respected father (may Allah have mercy on him) had exhorted me to attend the classes in Jamiya Ashrafiya as long as I remained in Lahore, and in Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband

as long as I remained in Deoband. After reaching Lahore, in line with these instructions, I presented myself to Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Hasan (*quddisa sirruhu*) and mentioned our respected father's (may Allah have mercy on him) instructions. He kindly permitted me to sit in the relevant classes. With this arrangement, I continued attending all my lessons there. Coincidentally, two of the sons of Hadhrat Mufti Sahib, i.e. Hadhrat Mawlana Abdur Rahim (may Allah have mercy on him) (who later passed away at a young age) and Hadhrat Mawlana Fazl al-Rahim (*mudda zilluhum*) (who is the current Rector of Jamiya Ashrafiya) were also studying the same books as myself. In this way, I received the honour of being their class fellow, and we would attend all the classes together.

The lessons here were not at the same point as I had left in Dār al-'Ulūm, and it also takes some time to get accustomed to new teachers. Therefore, the detriment to my studies which was bound to occur due to this kind of travel could not be fully compensated. However, something is better than nothing, so I was content with this opportunity. And later this opportunity turned into a great treasure. It so transpired that our teacher of Sharḥ Jāmī and Sharḥ Tahdhīb went on leave. I took this development as salt on my wounds and proposed to the two sons of Hadhrat Mufti Sahib (*quddisa sirruhu*), who were both my classmates: "We should present ourselves to Hadhrat and request for a substitute teacher for these two books." They agreed and the three of us made our way to Hadhrat and presented our petition. Hadhrat was delighted at our request and replied with something beyond our wildest expectations. Hadhrat said: "Do not worry at all. I will teach you these books. You can come here during the scheduled time of those classes." Hearing this, our elation knew no bounds. Hadhrat had stopped teaching since a very long time. He had become handicapped by one leg after it had to be amputated, and his mere existence in this condition was an embodiment of enlightenment and right guidance. His company was ever-replete with anecdotes and quotes of his Shaykh Hakīm al-Ummah Hadhrat Thanwi (may Allah have mercy on him). In that young age of mine, he appeared to be the most holy personality in the entire world, and whenever the thought of doing baiy'ah with a pious elder would occur, my heart would not

incline towards anyone other than him. Someone looking at his condition at that time would not be able to imagine that he could teach books like Sharḥ Jāmī and Sharḥ Tahdhīb. However, Hadhrat showered us with his benevolence. His house was located on the third storey of an apartment in the madrasa of Neela Gumbad. We would present ourselves in his service daily. We would appreciate during those lessons as to how simply this epitome of holiness and wilayah (the state of being a wali, a friend of Allah ﷺ) made us understand the intricacies of naḥw (Arabic grammar) and mantiq (logic). The discussion about hāṣil and maḥṣūl in Sharḥ Jāmī is considered quite abstruse, but I remember that Hadhrat had explained it to us in a breeze. Similarly, our syllabus of Sharḥ Tahdhīb was until the discussion about Ḍābitah, and the topic about Ḍābitah, being difficult to understand, was removed from the syllabus. But Hadhrat said: "I will teach you this topic as well". And he did teach it and taught it wonderfully. May Allah Most High have infinite mercy on him.

After staying in Lahore for around twenty-six days, our respected mother had to travel to Deoband on 27 November 1955. Bhai Jān (respected Muhammad Zaki Kaifi) got ready to accompany our respected mother to Deoband, so we departed by train with him. Travelling to India involved new-fangled hardships in those days. Clearing customs and thereafter boarding the train were no less than a 'plain of gathering' of this world. The train took us to Amritsar, and a second train from there, which traversed across the entire Eastern Punjab, reached Deoband station late into the night. Having become accustomed to the urban life of Karachi and Lahore for six years, the places of Deoband etched in my childhood memory suddenly appeared much smaller. It seemed as if someone had suddenly miniaturized the images of the station, platform, and other places of Deoband which had been entrenched in my mind. There was a considerable crowd of our relatives on the platform, and the scene of our respected mother (may Allah have mercy on her) meeting them and exuberance reflecting from their beaming faces was worth beholding.

We stayed in the house of our maternal uncle, respected Anwār Karīm (may Allah have mercy on him). The next day I visited my childhood

streets and our house. Our house was taken over by immigrants, but they let us in. The following inscription affixed by our respected father (may Allah have mercy on him) was now inviting us to take lesson:

دنیا کا کچھ قیام نہ سمجھو، کرو خیال
اس گھر میں تم سے پہلے بھی کوئی مقیم تھا

Do not count on your stay in this world, take heed
Someone else used to stay in this house before you

Our respected father (may Allah have mercy on him) had affixed this couplet when this house was being constructed, at a time when we could not even imagine that we would have to leave it soon. Today, however, this couplet was inviting its new inhabitants to take heed. Besides this, when we were about to leave this house, my elder brother Muhammad Razi Usmani (may Allah have mercy on him) had inscribed a couplet with coal under an eave on the upper storey. This couplet could also be made out at the time:

یہ چمن یونہی رہے گا اور ہزاروں جانور
اپنی اپنی بولیاں سب بول کر اڑ جائیں گے

This garden will remain, while thousands of birds
Will chirp their songs and fly away

Anyway! After entering our own house with others' permission and becoming grateful to them for allowing us in, we left for our neighbourhood. Everything of our neighbourhood was where we had left it but appeared smaller than before. Even the square, about which I have mentioned before that to us it seemed to be a huge ground or stadium, appeared as if it had shrunk into a small courtyard.

Throughout the different stages of life, one considers various things big and important, but later when their reality manifests itself, one laughs as to how trifling a thing he considered big and important. This world also appears tremendously vast today, but once we reach the Hereafter, when the true reality of this world will reveal itself, we will surely laugh at today's myopic view of ours.

Anyway! During my stay in Deoband I began attending my lessons in Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, as my respected father (may Allah have mercy on him)

had instructed me. At that time, Sharḥ Jāmī was being taught by Hadhrat Mawlana Nasīr al-Dīn (may Allah have mercy on him) (who later became Shaykh al-Hadith). Alhamdulillah, I got the opportunity to benefit from him. *Kanz al-Daqāiq* and *Sharḥ Tahdhīb* were under Hadhrat Mawlana As'ad Allah, and *Maqāmāt Ḥarīrī* was under Hadhrat Mawlana Jalil al-Rahman. My paternal cousin Hadhrat Mawlana Sayyid Hasan (may Allah have mercy on him) was a competent and well-liked teacher at Dār al-'Ulūm at the time. He also used to teach *Maqāmāt Ḥarīrī* and both of us wished that I could study *Maqāmāt* under him. However, his class conflicted with my class of *Kanz al-Daqāiq*. I therefore missed out on benefitting from him. Nonetheless, a great benefit coming out of our visit to Deoband was that I received the good fortune of being a student, though an informal one, at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. During my time there, I also received the honour of seeing some pious personalities belonging to this institute. I was so young that I did not get the courage to meet Shaykh al-Islam Hadhrat Mawlana Husain Ahmad Madani (may Allah have mercy on him), but Alhamdulillah received the good fortune of seeing him from far.

One maternal aunt of mine was residing at a small distance from Deoband in a village in Khatauli tehsil called Sarai Rasulpur. Our respected mother (may Allah have mercy on her) went to visit her for two days and I accompanied her. Khatauli is the town which was home to our spiritual forefather Hadhrat Mianji Munnay Shah (may Allah have mercy on him). From here, a dirt road along the bank of a stream led to Sarai Rasulpur. We took this route on a rickshaw. Sarai Rasulpur was a small lush, verdant and idyllic village, the imam of whose sole mosque was our maternal uncle, who had taken up residence here for this very purpose. These two days spent in that village were extremely pleasant and enjoyable. This was my first time witnessing a purely rural life, and the following interesting incident took place during this visit. When a neighbour of our aunt came to know that we were visiting from Karachi, she called for me to her house. She was an old lady, and since I was only a twelve-year-old child, she did not observe purdah from me. Making me sit in her house, she asked: "Have you come from Karachi?" When I replied in the affirmative, she continued matter-of-factly: "Then of course you would know my son

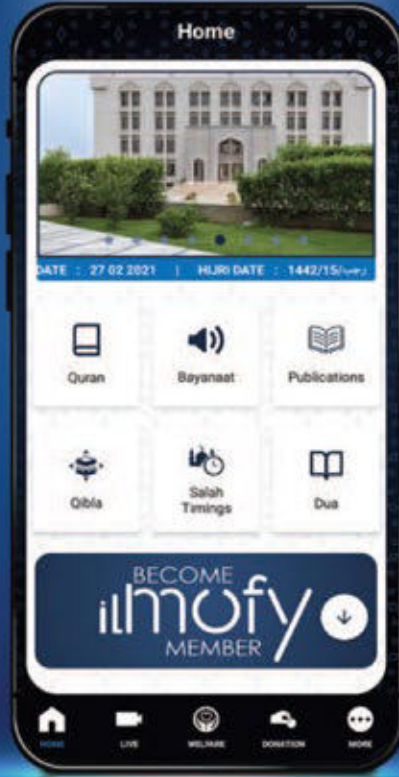
Husain. How is he doing?" I replied: "I do not know him." Her look of incredulity at these words was worth beholding. She exclaimed in a tone of utter astonishment: "Hai! You live in Karachi and still do not know Husain?" I asked: "Where does he live?" She replied: "Aray! He lives in the very same Karachi as you." Now I understood that she thought Karachi was similar to Sarai Rasulpur, i.e., just as all residents of Sarai Rasulpur know each other, all residents of Karachi must also know each other. At this I tried to explain to her that Karachi is such a big city that if one end of Karachi were in Sarai Rasulpur, the other end would be in Meerath. She was so dumbfounded at these words as if I were telling her a tale from the Arabian Nights.

Now it comes to mind that when the Noble Qur'an describes Paradise to be comparable in size to all the heavens and the earth, or when the Noble Messenger ﷺ informs us that the lowest inhabitant of Paradise would be bestowed a place twice the size of the entire world, our astonishment at hearing this is similar to that old village lady's amazement who was unable to comprehend that Karachi could be so much bigger than Sarai Rasulpur that all of its residents would not know each other, and whose simplicity makes us laugh. However, the Noble Messengers, who have either personally witnessed the world above with their own eyes or the Creator of the world above has directly informed them about it, when they look at us naïve inhabitants of the earth expressing our astonishment, they do not laugh at us, rather they have pity on us.

Anyway! These trips to Lahore and Deoband with my respected mother were quite pleasant and enjoyable, and turned out to be means of many blessings for me.

In those days, our respected father (*quddisa sirruhu*) was on a tour of West Pakistan on behalf of Jamiyat Ulama-e-Islam. While I was still in Lahore, he reached here as part of that tour and was scheduled to continue onwards to other places in Punjab and then to NWFP. I got the chance to accompany my respected father (*quddisa sirruhu*) on those trips. Before giving an account of those tours, it seems appropriate to describe my respected father's activities of those times.

(To be continued, *in sha Allah*)



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